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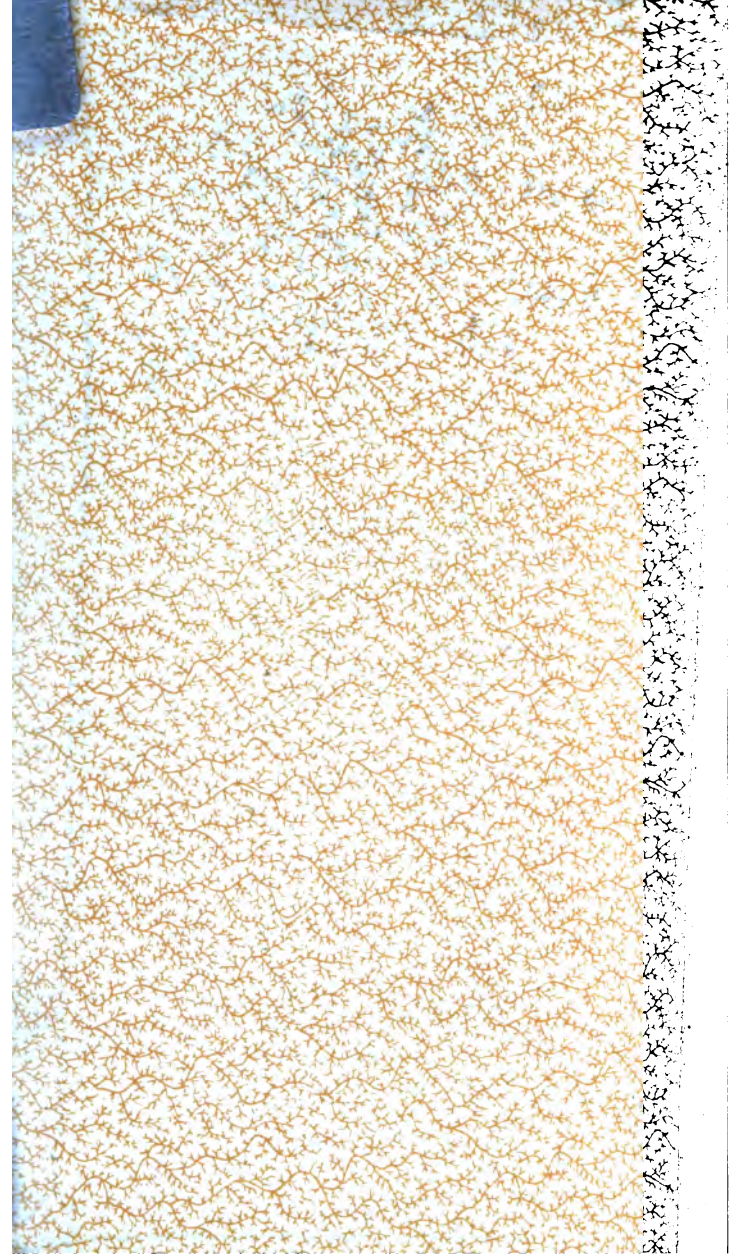
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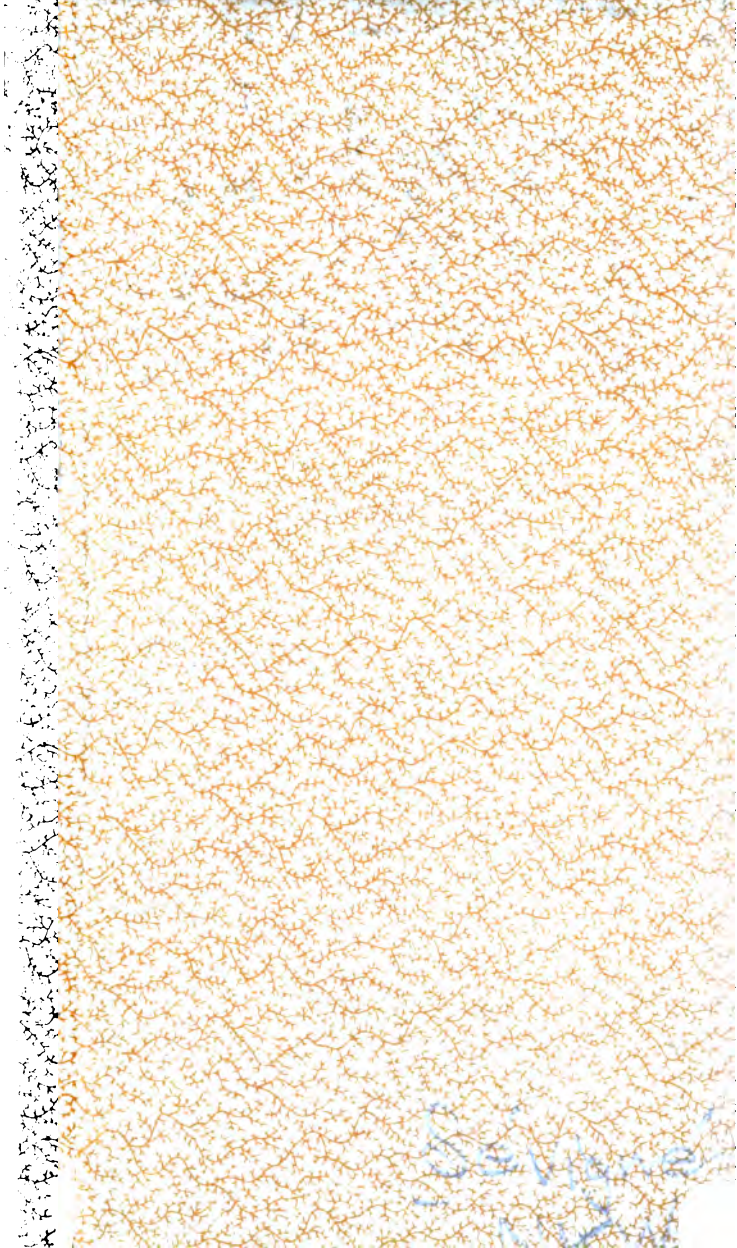
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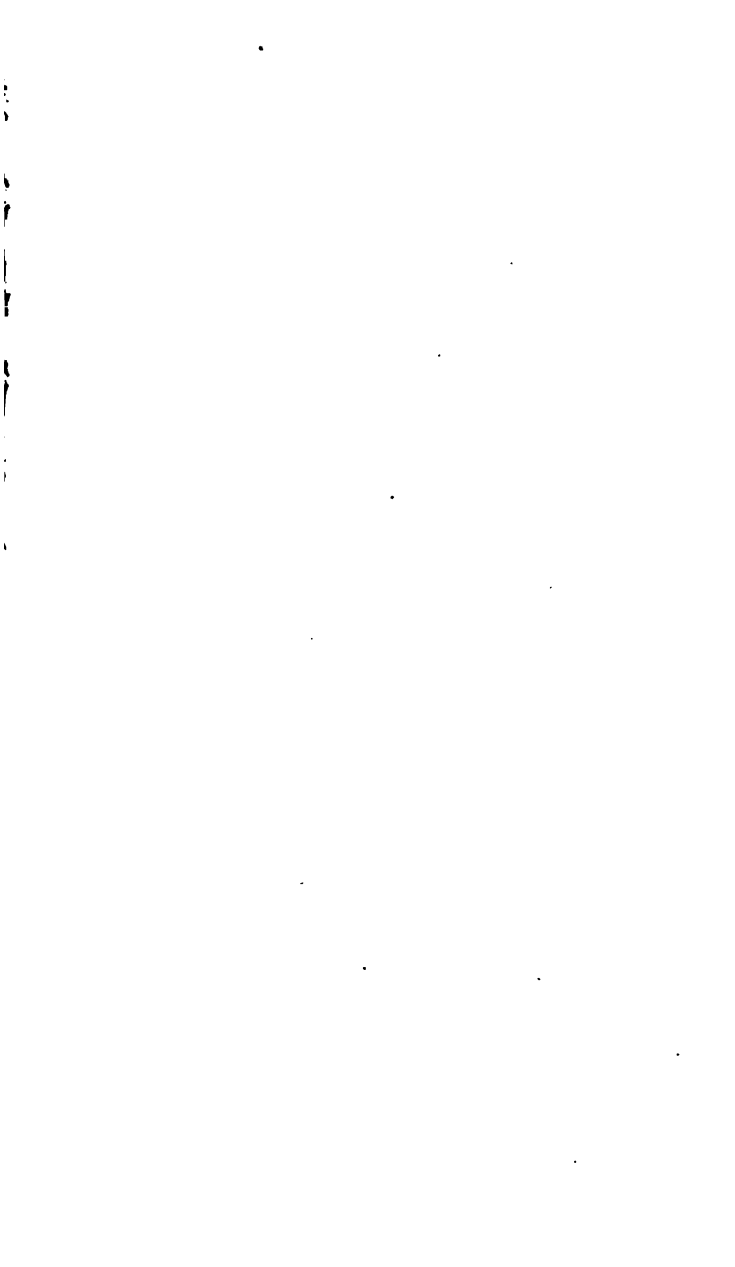


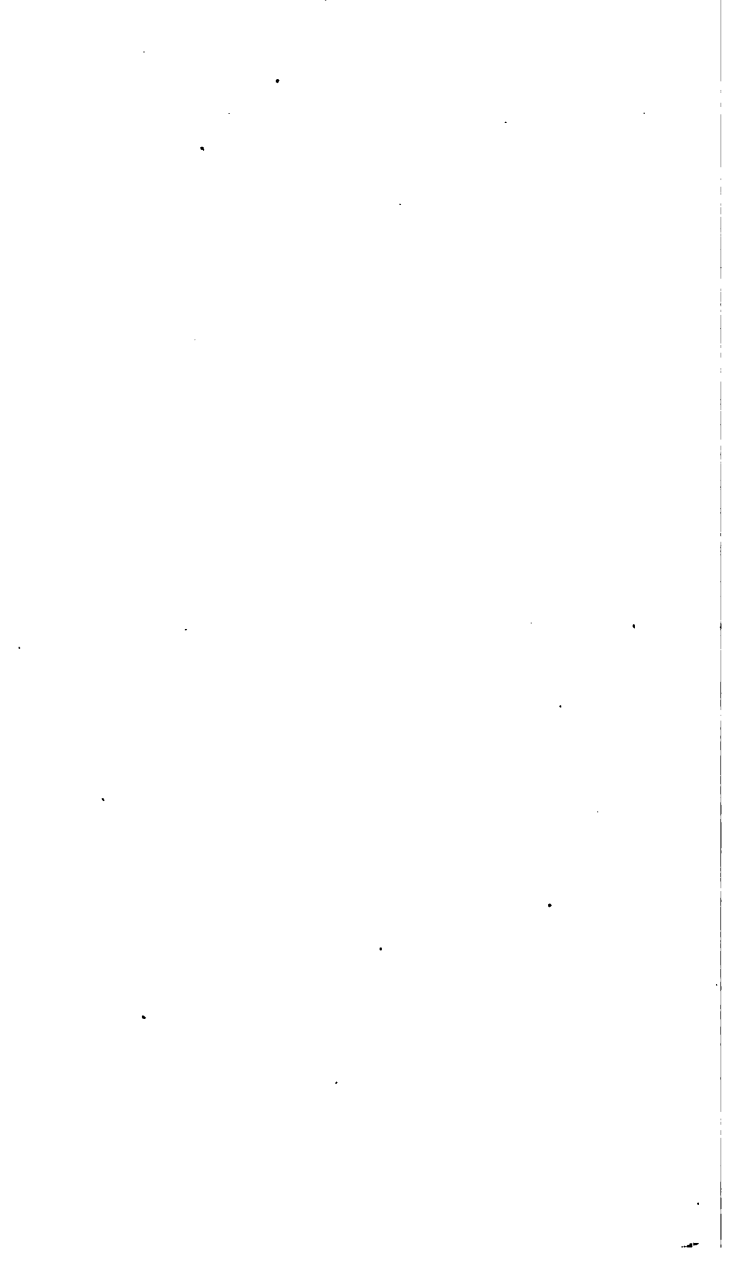


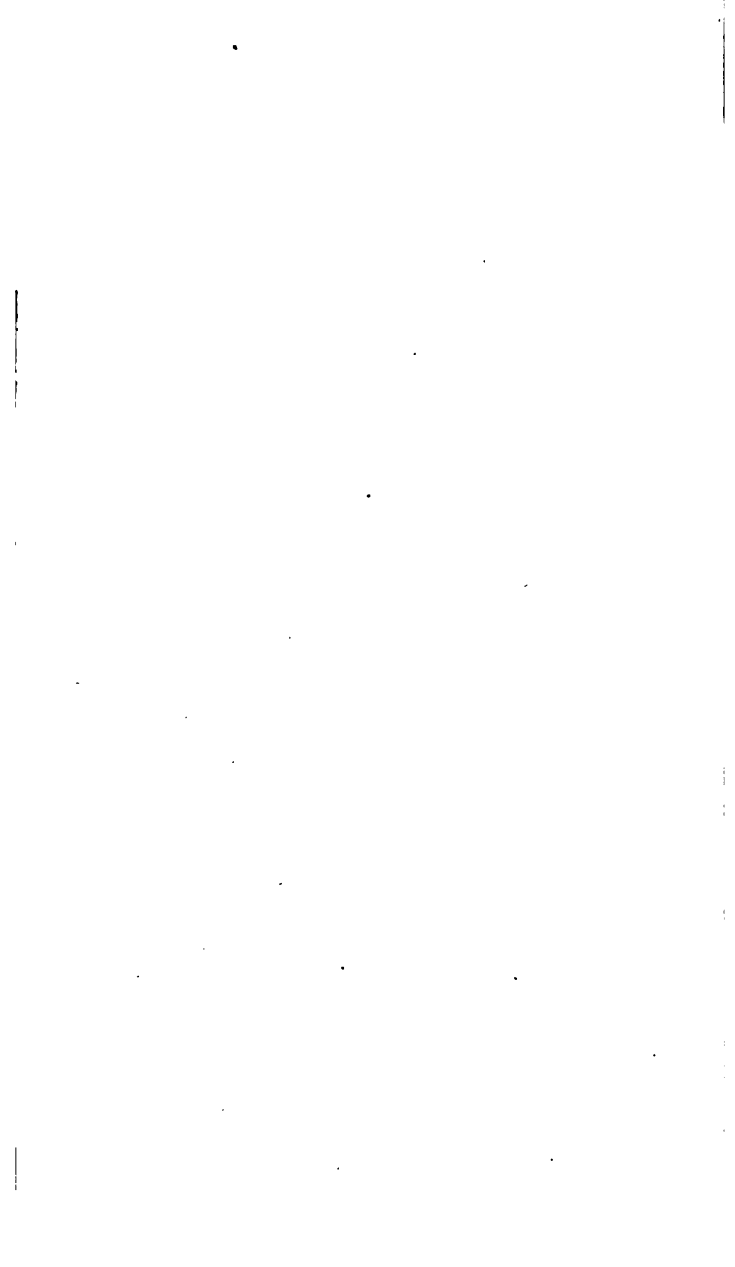
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LETTERS
OF
Marie de Rabutin-Chantal
MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ

TO
HER DAUGHTER
AND
HER FRIENDS.

AN ENLARGED EDITION,
TRANSLATED FROM THE PARIS EDITION OF 1806.
IN NINE VOLUMES.

VOL. V.

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1811.

XEROY VON



LETTERS

OF

MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ, &c.

[The Letters with an asterisk before the number
are new Letters.]

LETTER DX.

FROM MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO MADAME DE GRIGNAN.

Epissés, Saturday, August 21, 1677.

WE arrived here this morning at two ; we expected a thousand times to be overturned in the ruts, which we might easily have avoided by the aid of a farthing candle ; but what a thing it is to see neither heaven nor earth ! In short, we sent hither for assistance, just as the master of the house * was going to bed. You know there was no stopping on the road ; and what will surprise you still more, is, that I was not at all afraid ; it was the wise head of the abbé that set us on undertaking to travel fourteen leagues between Auxerre and this place, which is by no means a common stage. I had risen at three, so that I slept most delightfully in this elegant mansion, where we regretted so much the ab-

* The count de Guitaut.

sence of the hostess. You know the master, and his obliging manners towards those for whom he has any regard; he assures me I am among the number of his favourites, which I the more readily believe, on account of his friendship for you; he is so pleased with my having brought you into the world, that he is perfectly at a loss how to entertain me, and thinks nothing good enough for me. Our conversation is endless; he loves talking, and when once I begin, I am no bad hand at it myself; so that we are the best companions in the world. If your cheeks burn, or your ears tingle, do not attribute it to vapours, but to our talking so much about you. I flattered myself I should receive a letter from you here; ~~I have already been deceived in this respect at Auxerre; eight or ten days without hearing a syllable of you, seems to me a long time, and I assure you I am grown somewhat melancholy about it.~~ I depend upon receiving a letter from you before I close this; it is essential to my heart to love you, and to think of you. We begin already to murmur at our eight thousand livres by way of reparation, as well as at my corn being sold three days before the advance took place. This trifling precipitation cost me upwards of two thousand livres, though I do not much regard it. This is the triumph of Providence; and when I am conscious to myself of no fault, I make myself perfectly easy. I sent you a large packet from Auxerre, which I had written at two or three different places. I found no news here, but what I heard at Melun, that is, the raising of the siege of Charleroi. Our good-natured enemies have no inclination to disturb my tranquillity, for which I love them dearly.

LETTER DXI.

TO THE SAME.

Epoisses, Wednesday morning, August 25, 1677.

I HAVE here, my beloved child, received your letter of the 11th, which I expected with so much impatience; I am not used to such delays; it renders my whole journey uncomfortable to be thus disappointed. M. Guitaut does all he can to convince me how extremely glad he is to see me here: all our people are at Boubilly, where the farmer treated us yesterday with a most plentiful dinner; M. de Guitaut and M. de Trichâteau were there: this gave an air of comfort to the frightful Boubilly-house. I shall continue here till Sunday, and will write to you once more from this place. There is no sort of constraint in this house, so that I can read, work, or walk out, when I please; my host and I have a great deal of conversation together; and there is hardly a country you can name where we have not been travellers. He tells me a thousand stories of Provence, of you, of the intendant and Vardes, which I was ignorant of till now. He seems very devout; follows good teachers; has a great desire to pay his old debts, and to contract no new ones; this is the first step to be taken, when we become acquainted with true religion. Notwithstanding this, he is still an excellent companion; but it will soon be over, for charity towards mankind begins already to cut short half his words. He loves and esteems you beyond every thing, and I am persuaded it is not he who has deserted. So you will not tell me who it is! do you think I would betray it, if you seriously requested me not to do so? Well, well, my dear, I shall say no more about it. What a dread-

ful thing was the burning of the galley! alas, poor Saint-Même! I fancy I see him. But how comes it that you are not equally surprised at my news of the prince of Orange? He besieges Charleroi, discovers our army, and is so astonished at the sight, that he immediately decamps for Maestricht. His surprise was as great, as if he had never heard there was a French army in Flanders. We are told we owe him great obligations on this account, for it seems he was so well posted that we were very much at a loss where to encamp: this is the second time he has extricated us from a similar embarrassment*: you know I foresaw this. All our volunteers are returned: think you this piece of news did not deserve a paragraph in the Dutch gazette, if they had dared to tell us the truth? I have not heard from my son, so I suppose he is not returned: he has, no doubt, continued his journey, and it was well he did so: it was not in the nature of things for him to remain at Paris: to do this, he must have assumed the look and manner of a wounded person, and I think I told you he as much resembles a little man in perfect health, as one drop of water resembles another. The public has no mercy on the reputation of warriors.

LETTER DXII.

TO THE SAME.

Epoisses, Thursday, August 26, 1677.

I HAVE just received another of your letters, my lovely and beloved child, and may possibly receive still another before I set out, which will be on Sunday; so that I am only packing up to-day, till the departure of the courier. I shall have been here ten days, which you will say is a reasonable visit. I think I am tolerably

* The first siege of Charleroi was raised in 1672.

quick-sighted as to sincerity, and I feel no scruple to answer for that of the master of this house : be that as it may, he is caught in his own trap, if what he says of his friendship for me, and his joy to see me here, be not true. I am aware I do not incommode him ; the liberty I enjoy assures me all I have been saying is true. We talk of a thousand different subjects, and a thousand different countries, but they all end in you ; the transition is so easy, that we alight without the least pain. I am in perfect health ; do not tell me you have not a despotic authority over me, or that the damps of the evening are the least obstacle to your wishes ; it is true, the evening is my oldest friend, and that I cannot think of breaking with it entirely without sorrow. But the journey of Vichi, for instance, is wholly on your account ; and if your love for me had not given you such an insight into futurity, as to discover what my present good health prevents me from foreseeing, I declare positively I should not go there at all ; it is only therefore to satisfy your mind for ever, that I undertake this journey so cheerfully as I do.

You gave me a very excellent account of your thunderbolt. I remember to have formerly heard some very surprising effects of thunder, though I was very far from giving the credit to them that I now do, from what you have told me. The little girl struck dead, without seeming at all affected by any mortal symptoms, as if it had been by means of sympathetic powder, is really very astonishing. I can easily believe that you had curiosity enough to go and see her ; I would gladly have been of the party. I am very fond of the marvellous, which this accident certainly is ; for it is not at all like a common death. Your thunder at Grignan is louder and more majestic, and your lightning more vivid, than they seem to be any where else. Lucian could never

have called this clap of thunder a scare-crow in a wheat-field : it was most assuredly the thundering Jupiter himself, appearing in all the majesty with which he dazzled his mistress Semele* : we have never met with any thing like it in this country.

I dare say you will be pleased with Don Quixote : I am fond of the old style on many occasions, and had this been taken away from five or six books I could mention, they would entirely have lost their beauty, and I am sure I should never afterwards have taken the trouble to read them : but I cannot say that my regard for the Spanish original was so great, that I did not receive much pleasure from the translation. Should this kind of reading afford you any degree of pleasure, let me advise you to continue it, without prejudice however to the *wrath of Achilles*†, in which you are at present engaged. I am entirely of your opinion, in the preference you give to fables over the *epic poem*, as the moral presents itself to the mind not only in a quicker, but also in a more pleasing manner. We are not obliged to look for noon at midnight ; but let this be said with all due deference to Tasso, whom I can never forget without being ungrateful.

Corbinelli informs me, he thinks M. de Vardes will come to Bourbon with his daughter, whom, with himself, I am to take back to Paris : this idea, you will say, is comical enough. Should Vardes go by way of Grignan, as he tells me he intends to do, pray put it in his head to come to Vichi ; there are no waters in the universe preferable to them, the waters of the Seine only excepted. But to make choice of Bourbon merely because it is a little nearer, is very silly indeed. How

* The story of Semele is well known, as well as the manner in which she lost her life.

† The countess de Grignan was then reading Homer's *Iliad*.

happy you are in your new guests! and how good they are of their kind! how much I love them, and what pleasure you will do me in telling them so! Profit by their society, my dear child; they are so many inexhaustible sources of benefit.

Madame de Coulanges has written me a letter full of friendship and news, that is, the adorable supineness of the prince of Orange, the marriage of madame de Schomberg's niece, and a humorous description of the blunders that happened at this wedding, to the great distress of the bride. She tells me the journey to Fontainebleau is fixed, and that madame de la Fayette is recovering; all this is seasoned with so many pretty compliments and expressions of kindness, that her letters are very acceptable. Notwithstanding there is no one to peep over my shoulder, I shall say not a word about the secrets in a certain country; you know where I mean; they are trifles of no value, and which have not strength enough to bear the journey: here is one, however, which cannot fail of proving agreeable to the archbishop.

The handsome abbé may remember the letter which certain bishops wrote to the pope, relative to certain relaxations. He will tell you it was a heinous crime, or rather a monster stifled in its birth by the agents, who may be said to be in some sort omnipresent. I cannot pretend to say what wise or foolish spirit gave his holiness this information. He has written to his majesty, "that he was the more surprised at the suppression of this letter, as it is not usual for kings to prevent this kind of intercourse between children and their common father; that he never can believe this idea could occur to a prince, whose piety is so well known, and that his advisers certainly did not consider the consequences of it." He gave this brief in charge to the three cardinals

de Bouillon, d'Estrées, and de Bonzi. If this be true, it is certainly a very curious circumstance. Do not you admire how dexterously every thing is converted into a crime in our poor brothers? When they neglected consulting the pope, they were schismatics; when they laid before him their complaints of *probable opinions*, with other things of the same kind, they were guilty of rebellion. May we not suppose, my dear child, that they are either hated or beloved of God in an extraordinary degree, since they are thus persecuted? I am certain this little anecdote will amuse our prelates.

I am sorry for M. de la Garde's vapours. So you are both equally dissatisfied with the air of Paris! God must, no doubt, have given a new blessing to the air of Grignan, for never, since I can remember, was it suspected of restoring, invigorating, and renovating, young persons. God be praised that you enjoy your health there! Without reasoning or drawing any inference from this, I will content myself with saying, and I think I may say it safely, that this air has been as beneficial to me as to you, since it has recovered you from the deplorable state in which I left you at our last separation.

Saturday, August 28.

I have just received your letter of the 18th: this is the third I have received at this place. I set out to-morrow. Madame de Chastelus is come to visit me, instead of waiting for me to visit her. I shall spend one day with my relations, and be at Vichi on the fourth. You had reason to be surprised at the death of poor madame du Plessis*. I was much more affected at it than many others were; she loved us both, and you particularly; nothing could exceed the harmony that subsisted be-

* Guénégaud.

tween you ; she was carried off on the sixth day, and was quite insensible during the whole time : this is truly pitiable.

As for our cardinal, I have often thought as you do ; but whether his enemies are no longer in a situation to give us cause of apprehension, or his friends are not apt to take alarm, it is certain that nothing has gone amiss. You do well in writing to D'Hacqueville respecting this business, and even in making it known to the cardinal. Is he a child ? Cannot he come to St. Denis without asking leave of his governors ? and if they prove remiss in his affairs, is he therefore to lie still, and suffer himself to be strangled ? You are anxious, and with great justice and propriety, for the preservation of a man of such consequence, and one to whom you owe so much friendship. All you say respecting Charleroi is as sterling as pure gold ; mothers, sisters, friends, and mistresses, are all infinitely obliged to the prince of Orange : nothing can be more diverting than the conduct of these gentlemen during the whole campaign. The court is at Fontainebleau. It is said, madame de Coulanges will pass the time this excursion lasts at Livri ; pray have you sent her an answer yet ? M. de Guitaut is desirous to inform you how much he is pleased with my stay, and with what affection we both mentioned you ; but I cannot say where he is at present, and will close this letter, after embracing you a thousand times with my whole heart.

LETTER DXIII.

TO THE SAME.

Saulieu, Sunday evening, August 29, 1677.

I WROTE to you yesterday evening, and I write to you again to-day. I have at length quitted Epoisses, but have not yet parted with the master of this beautiful mansion. He has escorted me to this place; nothing is so easy as to love him; but you know it sufficiently: he has given me as handsome a reception as if I had been madame de Grignan herself: I cannot well say any thing stronger than this, which is indeed saying all in a word. Is it not true, count? pray answer me.

FROM M. DE GUITAUT.

IN short, we part to-morrow, and I shall have no other employment but thinking of you, as soon as I have quitted madame de Sévigné; while we were together, we did nothing but talk of you incessantly, so that I am sure your ears must have tingled: you are the proper person to say which ear it was, for we mentioned you in every way in which it is possible to speak of a friend: I could not help accompanying her to the end of her first day's journey after leaving this place. I think we shall part with regret. But we shall soon see each other again; and if you do not come, we will pay you a visit together. In the mean time think of nothing that is likely to make you uneasy; seek after every thing that may give you pleasure, and do not be misled by the idea that there is nothing in life calculated to effect this: the world is a very pretty thing, and he that seeketh findeth. This is an assertion you may not

credit : but I know what I know, and speak with more truth than you may imagine.

FROM MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ.

THIS is a wise man ; I tell him sometimes, seeing him as brisk as a bee, " My poor count, it is too early to go to bed yet ; you are still very green, my honest friend. There is a strong dash of the old man, I mean of the young man, in you." But I must tell you the whole affair. The other day he made a very slight dinner, for he wanted to do penance, it seems, and in truth he has much need of it : by mere chance I happened to call him M. de Grignan ; a name always, you know, at the tip of my tongue. He exclaimed, with great earnestness, " O, would to God !" I looked at him, and said, " I had much rather go to supper." We understood one another, and laughed heartily ; was I right ? pray answer me.

FROM M. DE GUITAUT.

It is certainly true, madam ; people sometimes carry their wishes very far, and, let me tell you, it is no easy matter to control them. You know my penance at least, though you do not know my transgressions. But as I find myself equally irresolute with respect to either, I leave you at full liberty to form of both what conjecture you please. I conclude, therefore, with assuring you that your mamma is at present a little tipsy ; but not with the waters of Vichi : I am in doubt whether, if the fit continues, she will go there at all ; it would be so much money thrown away.

FROM MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ.

It is he who is tipsy ; but I will not deny that I am a little inclined to be so myself. We sit so long at table here, that we drink and drink again out of pure complaisance, and to keep others in countenance, and so grow a little cheerful ; this is the whole affair. We met M. and madame de Valavoire, with an equipage like so many gipsies. We attacked the first litter, in which we found honest Valavoire. " Ah, what ? the old man ! " We all alighted : he kissed me, and I really fancied he was going to devour me ; for you know there is something terrible in his mien. His wife spoke to me about you, and of your state of health, so candidly that I was persuaded what she said was true ; you are not fat, but your complexion is clear, and you are in good spirits : every word she said seemed so extremely natural, that I was very much pleased with it. I found the roads strange ; I thought of your having suffered the same jolts. My coachman is a clever fellow, but he is rather too bold : M. de Guitaut says, he values him for two reasons ; in the first place, because he is an excellent driver, and, in the second, because he disregards my shrieks. Adieu, my dear ; this is enough, I think, for persons in their cups. There is a very skilful physician here, who said to me, " Pray, madam, why are you going to Vichi ? " Do you answer him, for I never know what to say to the question.

LETTER * DXIV.

FROM THE COUNT DE BUSSY TO M. DE CORBINELLI.

Chaseu, September 1, 1677.

It is not long ago, sir, that I answered your letter in one of madame de Sévigné's, and here I am again in the same sheet of paper with her †, writing to you from this place, where we spent a year together so agreeably. It was pleasant then, it is still more so now, and our friend is satisfied with it. We should have been happier had you been of the party, and Lucian, which we have been reading, would have appeared still more entertaining. The widow, whom you so much admire, has assisted me in doing the honours of my house. I forgot to tell you, that we went to meet the marchioness five leagues from hence. She made us come into her carriage, being unwilling to trust herself to the guidance of any but a celebrated coachman she has lately hired, who actually overturned us within a quarter of an hour of dinner, in the finest part of the road. The good abbé de Coulanges falling upon his niece, and Toulangeon upon his, gave us a little room. But admire the fortitude and good humour of our friend. At the moment we were overturned, she was speaking of the history of Don Quixote. Her fall did not stun her, and to show that her head was sound, she said the subject of Don Quixote must be deferred to another opportunity, and asked if the abbé was hurt. He had sustained no more injury than the rest. We were lifted up, and my cousin was very glad to trust herself to the guidance of my daughter's coach-

† Madame de Sévigné's letter, which preceded this, is lost, as well as all those she wrote to Corbinelli.

man, whom she had before so much despised. You will believe our adventure did not fall to the ground as we had done. We jested about it a long time, and then began to find fault with you.

LETTER DXV.

MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO THE COUNTESS DE GRIGNAN.

La Palisse, Friday evening, Sept. 8, 1677.

You see, my beloved child, I am at Vichi, that is to say, I shall dine there to-morrow, the fourth of this month, as I informed you I should. I wrote you a nonsensical letter from Saulieu, jointly with M. Guitaut; I wrote you four from Epoisses, at which place I received all yours, which were sent to me from Paris. I was seized and detained in Burgundy in such a way that if I had not chanced to think of you, and that you required me to drink the waters, I really think I should entirely have forgotten myself there. I went to visit Bussy in a house, not Bussy house, that has the finest air in the world, and the situation of which is delightful. La Coligny * was there; you know she is very pleasing: I have a thousand things to say to you, but I reserve those trifles for another occasion. I was obliged to dine with M. d'Autun, *poor soul!* and afterwards with M. de Toulangeon; and the day I ought to have set out, I was obliged to stay to talk over our affairs with the president Berbisi, who came there to see me. In short, I am now on your road to Lyons, and only twenty leagues from thence. On Tuesday, if it were the will of God, I might be at Grignan: but alas! I must banish that thought, my dear child; it would become a frightful dragon, if I were

* Daughter of the count de Bussy, and the same who married M. de la Riviere in June 1681.

not to take prodigious care to keep it under. Let us talk of d'Autun's journey hither, which was through a most diabolical road. I took a final leave of every place I passed. I am here at the good Saint Geran's, who has received me with as much kindness as if I had been her own daughter. You passed this way, my child, on which account I held every thing dear to me within twenty leagues round. When I do not hear from you, I am really to be pitied ; it makes me so low-spirited that I really think it injures me. It is now seven days since I left Epoisses, this is a long time ; the hope of hearing from you soon, is my only consolation. Pray tell M. de Grignan that I conjure him to write to M. de Seignelai, or to M. de Bonrepos, to obtain leave of absence for M. de Sévigné this winter, that he may come hither to solicit a ship. There are a number of vacant places ; the poor lad has written to me four times, he does not know what to do ; he is at Messina, and I really pity him ; it is his only hope of subsistence, his daily bread depends upon it : I beg you to join with me in providing for him, you know his name ; if this will not move you to compassion, remember he is my godson. I am in haste to send away this letter, as the post-boy will pass in a few minutes. Adieu, therefore, my dear lovely child ! I have not heard from you for a week ; but, ignorant as I am, I still know that I love you with the most tender affection.

LETTER DXVI.

TO THE SAME.

Vichi, Saturday evening, September 4, 1677.

I RECEIVED two of your letters, my beloved child, on my arrival ; I was in great need of them ; my heart

was sad, I am now well : I shall give them a second perusal, for they are my only consolation. I promise you. I will only write you a few lines after to-day. But, pray, follow the same rule in writing to me. Your letters run into extremes ; and to be so thin as you are at your age, is a bad thing : I hate Adam's rib to be so visible in your person. Do not be angry with me, my dear child, I must chat a little with you ; I am this moment arrived, and nothing shall make me hold my peace. M. de Champlatreux is already come to see me ; the good abbé is very much pleased with his conversation, and will often invite him to dinner. Can you guess who has sent to inquire after me already ? The marquis de Termes, who arrived yesterday, very ill of the gout and colic : they say his beard is as long as a capuchin's : it was extremely civil of him. The chevalier de Flamarens, and M. and madame d'Albon, and M. de Jussac are with him : a great deal of company is expected besides. But I had almost forgotten the best of all, Vincent, who is already on the point of leaving this place, and will take great care of me. I am in very good health, and I know not what I can do better than keep myself so. I wrote to you yesterday from La Palisse, where I saw a beautiful little boy ; he is seven years old, and I am sure yours must be just such another ; his father, who is M. de Saint Geran's gentleman, has taught him the exercise of the half-pike and musket ; it is the greatest amusement possible to see him perform : you would certainly love him. This exercise serves to supple his limbs ; he is besides cool, expert, and resolute. His father spends all his time with the army, and is now at Palisse, on account of his ill state of health, where he amuses himself with making his son a complete little soldier : I should prefer this to a dancing-master.—Should fortune throw such a person in

your way, indulge yourself in the same amusement, and I will answer for the consequence. The archbishop has written to the good abbé in the kindest and most obliging terms imaginable, to induce him to undertake the journey to Grignan; but I do not see that this shakes his resolution, though I think it makes some little impression on him. I have a great deal to say on the subject of your two letters just received. But, though I have not yet been initiated at the fountain, I will set you an example. A certain courtier said the other day to madame de Ludre, "Upon my soul, madam, you are handsomer than ever!" "I am glad of it," said she, "as I am one degree less ridiculous." I thought the repartee pleasant enough. Madame de Coulanges takes inconceivable care of me: I look around me; am I the only fortunate person? She pays me the attention she herself receives from so many others. La Bagnol writes me a thousand affected things. Adieu, my dear child! take care, I beseech you, how you return in the depth of winter, and avoid coming the round-about way of Rheims. Believe me, no constitution can endure such terrible fatigue; such journeys as these wear out the body, as they do our carriages.

LETTER DXVII.

TO THE SAME.

Vichi, Monday, September 6, 1677.

BE not uneasy, my child; I write to you at six in the evening, at a distance from the water, and free from any sort of vapour. I do it, that I may indulge myself in the pleasure of chatting with you a little while, as I have given up every other correspondence. Do you not think we are both at too great a distance, and too near

each other? This distance is a real evil to both. I pass the day with M. de Termes* and Flamarens; I am their only comfort; I know not what ails them, but they are certainly both very far from well. They brought one of the musicians belonging to the opera with them; he plays better than Baptiste, and amuses us highly. There is besides a little impertinent hump-backed fellow, who is always singing, and who imagines himself an admirable performer; he is a perpetual source of laughter to us. M. de Champlatreux is our grand Druid, and keeps the best house in the universe. Good heavens! why could I not have been under your management at this place? M. and madame d'Albon, a sister of mademoiselle de l'Estrange, the fair madame de Sourdis, with a thousand others of all ranks and denominations are here: never was there seen such a multitude of company, or such a series of fine weather; the month of September has neither the extremes of winter nor of summer, and this is the finest September you ever saw. Madame said the other day to madame de Ludre, whilst she was playing with a pair of compasses, "I must certainly pluck out those two eyes of yours, that do so much mischief." "Out with them! for they have not done half the mischief I wished." It would be pleasant enough if I were to send you all the witticisms that have been said by that beauty. How are you, my beloved? and what is become of the pain you complained of in your leg? Is it possible this could really have been of any service to you? It must then have been some humour that might have fallen upon your lungs, and not a mere over-heating of blood. And pray

* Cesar Auguste de Pardáillan, marquis de Termes, long attached to Gaston d'Orleans, and engaged in the intrigues of the Fronde, had quitted the court. He was handsome, well-made, a man of wit, very lively, very mischievous, and of a very bad character.

is the poor little girl recovered? If you love me, my dear, if you really love me, endeavour to grow fat. Ah, how thin you must be, since even M. de Grignan complains of it!

Tuesday evening.

I have received your letter of the first of September. What would you have, my child? What exchange or barter do you wish me to make? Ah! keep what you have, and think what you are, when you are not devoured by all the dragons in the world. You had some very black and cruel ones at Paris; but when you please, what a fund of pleasure and delight do not we find in your good humour! I often sigh when I mention your name, and when I think of you. I do not answer your letter, merely because I would not vex you: for you deprive me of the joy of my life, in depriving me of the pleasure of conversing with you; but you must not be contradicted: you pass very lightly over many things; and I, on the other hand, make no answer to them at all. I only beg you to inform D'Hacqueville of your plan for the winter, that we may know whether we are to take the hotel de Carnavalet, or not. I likewise entreat you to take care of your health: mine is admirably good; the waters agree with me perfectly. Vincent is one of my governors, as well as Champlatreux: every thing is settled with the strictest order and regularity: we all dine at noon, sup at seven, go to bed at ten, and rise to drink the waters at six.

I wish you could see to what an excess the presence of de Termes and Champlatreux has carried the head-dress, and other ornaments, of two or three belles of this country. In short, from six in the morning, every creature is abroad, with fashionable head-dresses, powdered, curled, see-saw caps, paint, patches, little pendent

coifs, fans, long strait stays; in short, it is truly ridiculous. Yet, for all that, the waters must be drunk; and they return again from the mouth, and by perspiration, very plentifully.

LETTER DXVIII

TO THE SAME.

Vichi, Monday, Sept. 13, 1677.

WHAT, my dearest and beloved child! you have been ill, have been bled twice, have had reason to fear a return of your quinsy, and have been spitting blood! They say it proceeded only from the throat; but pray is this the blood that was in so good a state? Had this serosity, which has fallen into your legs, fallen upon your lungs, what a situation we should have been in! All this I was wholly ignorant of, living in perfect security, and relying upon your word: your letters were neither shorter nor less natural; I had not the smallest suspicion of any thing, though you were in this condition when I arrived at Epoisses. If we were to make it a scruple of conscience never to laugh but with reason, the surest way would certainly be, never to laugh at all, but to be perpetually sad: but we open our hearts to joy, and to a certain confidence which makes us hope those we love are well, when they tell us they are so; and we are loath to load the pangs of absence with additional inquietudes. It was not Vardes that told me of your illness, but a gentleman from Provencé, who told it to a sister of mademoiselle de l'Estrange, adding, you were perfectly recovered. Vardes arrived the same day, and assured me it was true, but that you were still very thin. If you do not follow the advice of Guisoni, with regard to cooling your blood, you will grow so thin and deli-

tate, that your life will scarcely be worth enjoying. Vardes has wholly removed my uneasiness, by telling me, in the most convincing manner possible, that your complexion is perfectly clear and fair, and without the smallest appearance of changing. He thinks he is somewhat of a favourite with you; he is perfectly transported at the thoughts of it, and I beseech you to respect his misfortune. He has met with a most divine reception here, and was strongly tempted to remain, being persuaded that the waters and company at this place are better for him than those of Bourbon: but M. de Champlatreux, by a most absurd policy, has obliged him to continue whether he would or not. We think it is from jealousy; for never was there such a *gardener*; his court is full of thorns and briars, and we have laughed heartily at it: poor Chesieres has told me so a hundred times; as I cannot yet comprehend that he is dead, I am often on the point of writing to tell him he is in the right.

Vardes and de Termes were very much pleased with each other: their minds harmonised: they threw doublets: the secret they discovered of pleasing each other, rendered them both more agreeable. I should have been very glad if Vardes had staid here; Corbinelli would certainly have come too. You may guess what a consolation it would be to me to have you here; I think I see your sentiments on this subject; but is it not evident that Providence has not decreed it, from disconcerting so many projects formed for that purpose? Providence must therefore intend you should come this winter; I have no inclination to spread such a report, but you should inform D'Hacqueville, that he may take the hotel de Carnavalet. I think it would be equally convenient to both, as well as a great deal of trouble saved in not looking farther. Persons who reside toge-

ther, have certain hours, morning and evening, that are lost in the hurry and bustle of visits. In short, I take it for granted, you agree with me on this subject, and that, as this house in a manner offers itself to our acceptance, we cannot do better than take it for the winter. Adieu, my dear child! We have excellent society here. The weather is delightful, the country beautiful, and we have the highest entertainment and best cheer in the world. Here are two or three conceited Jesuits; what pleasure it would give me to see them demolished by Corbinelli! Maimbourg* is an impertinent fellow; all his works smell of the shop: what an idea, to punish a Turk because he refused to salute the image of the Virgin!

LETTER DXIX.

TO THE SAME.

Vichi, Thursday, four in the afternoon,
September 16, 1677.

Ask the chevalier de Grignan if I have not taken great care of him, if I did not procure him a good physician, and if I am not an excellent one myself. I should never have thought of seeing such woful countenances as I see at Vichi: as we are numerous, whatever is best is sure to get together, so that there is always good company. I treat the chevalier's health very seriously; I see how his medicines operate, and leave him in a good way before I quit him. I begin the pump to-day, and fancy it will not prove so severe as last year, as I have

* A celebrated Jesuit, author of several histories, which were at first in great vogue, but were afterwards as much decried. He quitted the Jesuits' college by an order of the pope in 1682, for writing against the court of Rome, in favour of the clergy of France.

Jussac, Termes, Flamarens, before and after me, each his half-hour. We are, you see, a set of wretched companions, but not very miserable. I shall let you know what news we have; they have already begun, and think it the prettiest amusement possible. Good heavens, my child, in what a dangerous and painful situation you have been! It was precisely on the 15th of August, on a Sunday; you were not able to write to me, and the hurry and confusion of my departure prevented the uneasiness this would have occasioned me at any other time. The inflammation in your throat gives me great alarm, and so does the fever. Alas, my dear child, when the blood boils in this way, it is soon over. You had a fever, and were bled twice in one day, and besides you had one thigh and both legs swelled; what a malignity of humours must have occasioned this! and what would have become of us, had this humour fallen upon your lungs? Thank God you have got the better of this! that is certain, and I am no longer uneasy about it: but yet I wonder how you could contrive to deceive me, by writing such long letters. Is there no one in the world, then, who has sufficient authority over you to bring you to observe some kind of regimen, or care of your health? Will you never think of tempering the heat of your blood? I see no one who neglects the necessary care of life and health; all around me are proofs of it. You are the only person, I can discover, who seems desirous to finish the part you have to play in life with all possible expedition: yet if you loved me, you would have more compassion on me. When I reflect that every thing I do is wholly to please you, and that I am now going to attack, with the utmost courage and resolution, a perfect state of health, solely to quiet your fears on my account, without being able to prevail on you to follow the advice of Grisoni, I am lost in amaze.

I never, in my life, saw a young and beautiful woman take pleasure in destroying herself. Every body experiences that there are remedies for all kinds of disorders, and you affect to have faith in none. Medicines, notwithstanding, are extremely necessary, and I found myself much better for them at the Rocks. In short, I think you are very properly called a prodigy. I wished to tell you this to relieve my mind; but I shall say no more about it, for I do not intend to repeat old grievances, God forbid! but I could not forbear remarking how much my complaisance surpasses yours.

I fancy D'Hacqueville has taken the hotel de Carnavalet for us: we shall be very well accommodated there, and we ought to be satisfied, as nothing looks better, or can be more economical, than living together in the same house. I hope this journey, which is with the advice of the whole family, will prove as fortunate as the other proved melancholy and disagreeable by your ill state of health. Valavoire said not a word to me about your having been ill; you must have taught him his lesson well; and I, in the mean time, was writing you a parcel of nonsense from Saulieu. But, my child, let us say no more on the subject; you are possibly by this time become more complying and docile, after having seen the impetuosity of that blood of yours; and I, on my side, am drinking the most salutary waters, in the finest weather, the most delightful country, and in the most agreeable company that can possibly be imagined or desired. Ah, how beneficial these waters would be to M. de Grignan! The *worthy* takes them to remove the ill effects of so many good dinners, and to provide against illness for ten years to come. Adieu, my angel! pray write to madame de Coulanges.

LETTER DXX.

TO THE SAME.

Vichi, Sunday, September 19, 1677.

I FANCY, my dear child, that my last was a strange sort of letter. I was uncomfortable, I wrote with pain, from the effects of the pump: this was enough to alarm you. I assure you I am perfectly well to-day; I bathed myself a little in the Seneca style; I sweated very plentifully, and shall perhaps use the pump once or twice more before I go, in order to put an end to all disputes. Two days' repose will give me strength sufficient. I fancied the other day, in the heat of the engagement, that I closed my hands; I can now cut bread, and, in short, am quite well; time will accomplish that part of the cure which Vichi has left undone, and I am in no sort of uneasiness about the matter. I quit the chevalier and Vichi on Friday; I leave him in a fair way to do well, and consign the care of his health to excellent hands. We intend to rest at Langlar, where the chevalier is to come to see us. One day can do him no great harm. I rather think Termes and Flamarens will accompany him; this will be a very pretty pause. Jussac wishes to write to you, to inform you how much he respects you, and how much M. de Vendôme is disposed to love and esteem you, and to believe M^r. de Grignan in every thing he says; at least, if he be not very much changed since, which Jussac cannot believe.

Marseilles is at Paris; we have talked a great deal about past affairs; I think I painted them to the life. I wish, my beloved child, you would be sincere with me with regard to your health. I see you do all you can

to make me easy ; but when I recollect how dexterously you deceive me when you please, I do not place all my confidence on your words. I am of opinion that in illness a regimen should be observed, and I flatter myself you will grant so much to our friendship, as to follow some of the rules prescribed by Grisoni.

D'Hacqueville higgles so much about the affair of the hotel de Carnavalet, that I tremble lest he should let it slip. Good heavens ! what need of all this niggardiness for the trifling consideration of six months ? Can we better ourselves ? Write to him, as I shall do, to beg he would have the goodness not to make use of his profound judgement on this occasion. The chevalier and I often talk of you ; we are more apprehensive than you can be of the vivacity of your disposition, which wastes and exhausts you like Pascal. Did you but know, my child, what an impression this makes on the minds of those who love you, you would certainly pity us. The *worthy* takes the waters in order to empty his budget, which is full ; which is equivalent to saying, in order to fill it, and keep it so ; we take great care of each other. These waters are so very salutary, that M. de Grignan might be at once washed, bleached, and cured of all his disorders by them ; it would be no bad management in him too, to think of emptying his budget. All our toppers are satisfied as to their health, and more so with the fine weather and the beauty of the country. Adieu, my dearest and most amiable child ! I am sure you now wish me to resign my pen. Do you not find it a great amusement to see the marquis profit by the lessons of M. de la Garde ? This puts me in mind of my pretty little boy of La Palisse *. The chevalier will tell you,

* In Letter of the 4th September, page 16.

we are sometimes so much engaged with company, that, for want of time, we put off taking our medicines till we get to Paris.

LETTER DXXI.

TO THE SAME.

Vichi, Tuesday, September 21, 1677.

I AM extremely mortified at having received no letter from you to-day. My heart is quite oppressed, and I continually represent you to myself as ill: I can place no confidence in your health, and mine suffers in consequence. I hope I shall be relieved from this anxiety by to-morrow. Corbinelli is detained at Paris by a tertian ague, and an alarming delirium. I fancy d'Hacqueville will hire the hotel de Carnavalet for us, unless madame de l'Islebonne should change her mind, and not go to Saint Remi: I should discover our usual ill luck in this. I am wonderfully well, except that I cannot bear the pump: the reason is, I had no need of it this year, and that it made too great an impression on me. I shall finish taking the waters to-morrow; shall take medicine on Thursday, and on Friday shall set out for Langlar. I leave the chevalier in a fair way of doing well; he will find himself much better for the waters, and, I believe, will have no farther occasion for them in a week or ten days. Adieu, my dear child! I embrace the Grignans, great and small. Take care that the musket and half-pike of the little marquis be proportioned to his height.

LETTER DXXII.

TO THE SAME.

Vichi, Wednesday evening, Sept. 22, 1677.

I HAVE just received a letter of the 15th. I fancy it has taken a trip to Paris. The chevalier has received one from the handsome abbé of the same date, which shows me you were well, at least on that day. It is true, that if Vardes had mentioned your illness to me, in terms ever so little stronger than those he used, no consideration would have kept me from you; but he managed so well, that I have no food for uneasiness but what is past by. I conjure you, my beloved child, to send me word of the return of your health and beauty. I cannot dispense with this intelligence, nor can I endure the thoughts of your being less handsome at your age. Do not fancy, therefore, that you can reconcile me to your extreme thinness, which is too plain a proof of your ill state of health: mine is as perfect as it can be. I put an end to-morrow to all my business, and take my last medicine: I have drunk the waters sixteen days, have twice used the pump and the hot bath; but the pump was too much for me, and I am sorry for it, but it made me too hot and giddy; in short, I had no occasion for it, and drinking the waters was sufficient. I set out on Friday for Langlar; my mess-mates, Termes, Flamarens, and Jussac, will follow me thither; the chevalier will come to see me on Saturday, and will return on Monday to begin the pump. He will be only a week without me: he will receive in my absence a thousand presents from my friends, and is very well satisfied with me. My hands are better: the inconvenience is so very slight, that I shall use no remedy but

time. I am perfectly in despair, my child, at the frightful ideas you entertain. Heavens! is it possible, that in my present state of health, I can do you any injury? It is certainly very much against my inclination if I do. I know not whether it is your intention to write me such admirable passages as you are accustomed to do. You could not possibly fail to succeed in such attempt, and I can assure you they would not be suffered to be forgotten: you are not sensible of the brilliancy of what you say, and so much the better. You have some little inclination to divert yourself at the expense of your humble servant, as well as at her stays and head-dress: but you would certainly have fallen in love with me, had you seen the fine figure I cut at the well. I have a notion the hotel de Carnavalet will suit us better than the other house we heard of, which is so small that not one of your people could possibly have been accommodated there. We shall see what the great D'Hacqueville will do; I tremble lest madame de l'Isle-bonne should take it into her head to stay. I am still very uneasy about Corbinelli; he has been very severely handled by his ague, his delirium, and every thing that is frightful: he takes the potable gold; we shall see what effect it produces*. I desire you would still talk to

* The time was at hand when the most pompous names given to the most complicated mixture, served to veil the ignorance of the chemists, physicians, and apothecaries, and to increase their bills. Potable gold was one of those whimsical remedies, of which muriatic acid was the basis. The solution of gold, which was added to it, was only used to swell the expense. Powdered pearls were also sometimes used to make their drugs still dearer. The severe Guy-Patin had no mercy upon these quacks: he calls them *Arabian cooks*, and laughs at their *farrago*. He, and some of his medical friends, prided themselves upon having destroyed this *colossal extortion*. Their triumph was premature. The cheap medicines they pretended to have restored, were not at that time

me of yourself and your health : do you use no method to repair the loss of your two bleedings ? Good heavens, what a disorder ! and what apprehensions must it give to those who love you ! Here come the chevalier and the rest of my old companions, with one who certainly plays a better fiddle than Baptiste. We should be delighted to send you and M. de Grignan a chacone and an echo with which he charms us, and with which you would likewise be charmed. You shall hear him this winter.

LETTER DXXIII.

TO THE SAME.

Langlar, at the Abbé Bayard's,
Friday, Sept. 24, 1677.

I HAVE received at Vichi, my dearest child, the letter of the 15th, about which I was so uneasy. I should have been sorry not to have known the history of the good curate du Saint Esprit ; he is now at Semur, and M. de Trichâteau, with whose gigantic figure you are so much offended, told us that an angel from heaven had come to him at Semur ; that he was a saint of paradise ; that his name as well as the cause of his journey were equally unknown ; that he made no complaint, but was rather given to taciturnity ; and that his merit in this instance had so affected him, that he had taken him home to his house, and entertained him with real pleasure in having such a person for his guest. Guitaut and I listened to all this ; and as I am generally pretty active in regard to our poor friends, I besought him to

received by people of rank ; and it appears, that Corbinelli was treated like a nobleman, whether he would or not.

continue his generosity, and assured him this person was certainly a friend of truth. This is really droll enough, for I thought of nothing less than the good curate. I have been just wishing Guitaut to inform him of the merit of this person, and to beseech him to establish the favourable sentiments of Trichâteau on this subject. The poor curate, then, is somewhat comforted in his exile. If I can render him any little services at Paris, I assure you I will not fail. Your spiritual father has interested you in this affair by so much useful and important advice, that I should be unnatural were I to neglect assisting you on this occasion. Your account is admirable, and could not fail to have its effect: alas, my child! you know how much I am disposed to succour the afflicted, and how much I am offended at certain instances of injustice.

The conclusion of your letter has charmed me: come away then, my dearest child, and come without any weight upon your heart, since the good archbishop has pronounced, *ex cathedra*, that your journey is necessary to the interests of your family.

I wait for news from d'Hacqueville, in regard to this hotel de Carnavalet; but he raises so many difficulties in the business, that if we have it at all, it must be through madame Coulanges, who smooths the way before him. You ask leave to bring your son with you, and it is what I approve above all things; he will be taken good care of amongst us all: but do you know who is quite delighted with the idea? Why, the *worthy*; he swore he should not die in peace if he did not see the little man once more. I set out to-day from Vichi, for I must now begin to talk a little of ourselves. The good abbé was quite enraptured at the sight of this terrace, and M. de Termes seemed to me a very proper

person to accompany us on account of his great and natural admiration of this beautiful view, which is certainly one of the most sublime sights in creation. I wish for you every where, but particularly when I meet with any thing that pleases me. The chevalier de Grignan will come down to-morrow, and returns to complete his medicines: if he has the good luck to have the handsome abbé in my stead, he will not be much to be pitied. The waters have effected wonders with me; as for the pump, I could not possibly bear it: I was afraid of a fever, and these remedies you know are not to be trifled with.

LETTER DXXIV.

TO THE SAME.

Saint-Pierre-la-Montier, Wednesday noon,
Sept. 29, 1677.

THE post is just going to set out, my dearest child; for which reason I shall only say a word or two. I wrote to you from Langlar, in the chevalier's letter: I had received yours by La Garde. I left the chevalier in the hands of my physician: he is going to use the pump, after which he intends to pay you a visit. We set out on Monday; I slept at M. and madame d'Albon's; on Tuesday I went to Moulins, where I met my messmates, and Vardes, who had come from Bourbon again, to take his leave of me once more. He afterwards set out for Grignan and Languedoc. I shewed them to all the little ones of Valençai *, who are very lively: from thence we went to madame Fouquet's, who is not so

* These ladies resided with the nuns of Saint Mary de Moulins.

gay, but is respectable on account of her virtues and her misfortunes ; I supped and slept there. These gentlemen have been exchanging their equipages, so that Vardes takes Termes's grey horses to Grignan, and Termes takes Vardes's black horses to Fontainbleau. I know not whether M. de Champlâtreux might not think the exiled horses ought to have the same permission ; be it as it may, the poor animals have taken very different routes, which they would never have done had they not changed masters ; but so the world goes. We are now got with our gentlemen as far as Briare ; where we leave them, in order to take the road of Autri. I told Vardes that I begged him to tell you I had rather you were at Paris than at Grignan. I shall do every thing in my power to give you an agreeable reception. You know better than I do whether we have a house or not. I have never heard from d'Hacqueville, so that I am still in the dark. All our company present their respects to you, and especially the *worthy*. I enclose a note for Vardes, in answer to his, complaining of not seeing him this morning. I wish you perfect health ; the state of your blood occasions me perpetual alarms. As for myself, I am as well as can be ; I drank the waters in the finest season imaginable, and declined using the pump ; at least, the use I made of it, is scarcely worth mentioning. The honest de Lorme is perfectly satisfied. I embrace you a thousand times, my lovely and beloved child. I long to hear from you.

LETTER DXXV.

TO THE SAME.

Gien, Friday, October 1, 1677.

We took a trip to-day after dinner, which you would have been much pleased to have taken with us. In the afternoon we were to have taken leave of our good company, and set out each on a different road, some towards Paris, and others towards Autri. This good company not being sufficiently prepared for this dismal separation, had not the power to support it, and would absolutely accompany us to Autri. We laid before them all the inconveniences attending such a step, but being overpowered, were obliged to yield. We all passed the Loire at Châtillon: the weather was fine, and we were delighted, to see the ferry-boat return to take in the carriages. Whilst we were on board, the conversation turned on the road to Autri; they told us it was two long leagues, consisting of rocks, woods, and precipices. We, who had been accustomed to such fine roads ever since we left Moulins, were somewhat alarmed at this account; and the good company and ourselves repassed the river ready to die with laughing at this little alteration; all our people shared in the jest, and in this gay humour we took the road to Gien, where we all are at present. After consulting our pillows, which will in all likelihood advise us to make a bold stroke at a separation, we shall go, our good company their way, and we ours.

Yesterday evening, at Cone, we visited a real hell, in which are the forges of Vulcan. Here we found eight or ten Cyclops forging, not armour for Eneas,

bat anchors for ships. You never saw the blows of hammers redound so exactly, or with so beautiful a cadence. We were in the midst of four furnaces; these demons sometimes surrounded us on all sides, melting in sweat, with pale faces, glaring eyes, mustachios like bears, long, black, and bushy hair; this was a sight to terrify persons less polite than ourselves. For my own part, I saw no possibility of refusing to comply with the will and pleasure of these gentry in their infernal regions. At length we got out by the help of a shower of silver; with which we took care to refresh them, to facilitate our escape.

We saw, the evening before, at Nevers, the boldest race you ever beheld: four ladies in a coach, happening to see us pass in ours, were seized with so strong a desire to behold us once more, that they must needs get before us, whilst we were travelling on a road which was never intended for more than one carriage. My child, their coachman passed us so rashly, and so closely, as almost to brush our whiskers; they were within two fingers' breadth of tumbling into the river: we all cried out, "Lord have mercy!" they burst into a laugh, and kept galloping on before and above us in so frightful a manner, that we have scarce recovered from our panic to this hour. These, my child, are our most remarkable adventures; for, to tell you that the country is wholly occupied in the vintage, would be no very surprising news in the month of September. Had you been in Noah's case, as you said the other day, we should have been in no such a dilemma. I must say a word of my health: it is as good as you could wish; the waters have performed wonders, and I find you have made a bugbear of the pump. Had I foreseen this, I should have been more on my guard how I mentioned it to you: it gave me nothing like a head-ache, only I

thought I felt my throat a little heated; and as I did not sweat much the first time, I held it certain that I had no need of that degree of perspiration I underwent last year, so I contented myself with large draughts, by which I find myself perfectly recovered; there is nothing to compare with these waters.

LETTER DXXVI.

TO THE SAME.

Autri, Monday, October 4, 1677.

I WROTE to you from Gien, and told you a thousand follies. Night afforded us the counsel we stood in need of, and which I foresaw, which was to part; this we did with regret, for good company is always very agreeable. We arrived at this place by a tolerable road, and were charmed to have avoided that cross road which is absolutely good for nothing, without any other inconvenience than that of passing and repassing the river. We found the little countess de Sanzei*, with her pretty face, sadly grieved at her deafness. She is for ever in tears; and it must be owned that this is no small misfortune at an age in which we wish to possess all the senses.

I wonder how I could have written this, with the surprise and grief at the sudden death of the poor abbé Bayard upon my heart: I must surely have been dreaming as I wrote it; it was the first thing I discovered in a letter from d'Hacqueville, which was waiting for me here. He must have written to you about it, as well as to me; but I must speak of it for myself. I wrote to you from Langlar, on a certain Sunday, in the cheva-

* Sister of M. de Coulanges.

lier's letter. It was nothing but joy and dancing at the abbé's. Fiddles, fifes, and drums, made a sort of country-wake upon the beautiful terrace. His excellent state of health was the general topic ; I had been drawing a picture of him to one of our party who had never seen him, and I said a great many things in praise of his heart and mind, because there was much to say of both. Do you know what happened, my child, while I was thus employed ? He was expiring ; and on the next day when, before I left his house, I wrote him an account of this gaiety, which I am sure would have charmed him, he was no longer in being, and I was writing to a corpse. I assure you I gave a shriek on hearing this sad dispensation of Providence, and it will be a long time before the impression it made on my mind will be effaced. I really longed to see him, to tell him how happy we were at Langlar, and our regret on account of his not being with us, as the only thing we wanted to complete our pleasure : and the very first line I read was his death ; and then the kind of death ! He was in perfect health, had spent the evening at madame de Coulanges's with M. de la Rochefoucault, had been speaking of me, and how glad he was to think I was at his house. On the Sunday he took some broth, which he threw up ; after dinner he was thirsty, and called for something to drink ; they left him for a moment to get it, and on returning, found him dead in his chair. What a surprise ! and then the suddenness ! Though a worthy man, a person may be a very indifferent Christian : without confession or preparation ! in short, it is an ample subject for meditation. He had an abscess on his lungs, which burst suddenly and choked him. My dearest child, I ask you a thousand pardons, but I cannot help thinking of this deplorable event. I am certain the chevalier must be surprised at the cir-

cumstances I have mentioned to you. I have written to my physician to give me an account of the health which I left under his care. I do not like your thanking me for the friendship I entertain for the chevalier : he can walk alone, and has no need of your assistance. You say I set a bad example in not going to see you : and pray what friendship would have undertaken such a journey, since I have not ? A friendship that travels from place to place, a friendship without a *worthy*, a friendship without any business at Paris, or a new house to take possession of ; such is the chevalier, though it seems you insist on his not passing beyond Lyons. I very much doubt whether he will obey your orders. As for myself, I am going to put the hotel de Carnaval in order to receive you ; for it is ours at last, and I am heartily glad of it. I am perfectly well, and satisfied with the waters ; they seem exactly calculated for me. I stood in no need of the pump ; as I had no sort of serosity, it would certainly have over-heated me. It was therefore wholly owing to my wisdom and judgment, that I left it off without a head-ache, or the smallest inconvenience. I am grieved at the uneasiness you felt on this account ; the chevalier will inform you whether I speak the truth. In the name of God, let us avoid saying any more of the cruel things we have formerly said ; be as well as I am, and I pledge my word to you, that I shall cease to be uneasy. What joy, my dear child, will it afford me, to see you once more fair and beautiful, and without *dragons* ! Good heavens ! what strange destroying things are these dragons !

We set out to-morrow morning, in order to be at Paris on Thursday week. My son is not regular in his correspondence with me ; he was well about a fortnight ago, and he will be charmed to find we have got a house over our heads, and that you are coming back. He

seems to me to be as full of concern for you, as you are for him ; and as to myself, neither of you appear to hate me. Is not this as it should be ?

LETTER DXXVII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Thursday, October 7, 1677.

It was impossible to take better measures than you did, that I might receive your letter the moment I stepped out of my carriage. Here it is, I have read it, and prefer it to all the salutations on account of my arrival. The coadjutor, M. d'Hacqueville, the fat abbé, M. de Coulanges, and madame de la Troche, have played their parts as friends, and extremely well too. The coadjutor, and M. d'Hacqueville, have informed me of the king's displeasure, on account of the poor curate*, and that the king had said to the archbishop, " He is a dangerous man, and teaches pernicious doctrine : I have already been spoken to in his favour ; but the more friends he has, the more determined I am not to re-instate him." This is what I have heard already, by which we may easily perceive that wrath is gone forth against our poor brethren. You quite overcome me with affection for the little girl † ; she must be as beautiful as an angel ; how fond I should be of her ! I fear, as you say, she may lose all her charming prattle, as well as her good humour, before I see her ; this will be a pity : your nuns of Aix (Saint Mary) will spoil her ; from the moment she enters among them, adieu to her

* See the Letter of the 24th September.

† Marie-Blanche, grand-daughter to madame de Sévigné, born November 15, 1670.

charms. Could you not bring her with you? Alas! we have only this miserable life of ours in the world, why then should we deprive ourselves of these innocent amusements? I know perfectly all that will be said in answer to this, but have no intention to fill my letter with it: you will, at least, have sufficient room to accommodate the dear child; for thank God, we have the *hotel de Carnavalet**. This is a good thing; there will be room for us all, so that we shall be quite in style. As we cannot possibly have every advantage, we must dispense with the fashionable inlaid floors and chimney pieces; but we shall have a handsome court, a charming garden, in the most pleasant part of the town, and good little blue girls, which, let me tell you, will be very convenient; and to crown the whole, we shall be together.

I wish I could prune away from that friendship which is so dear to me, your uneasiness respecting my health; ask all the men, you see, how handsome I am: I had no occasion to use the pump; Nature speaks aloud; she wanted it last year, as she really then stood in need of it; she would have none of it this season, and I only obeyed her voice. As for the waters, my dear child, if you are really the cause of my journey, I am obliged to you, as I am now perfectly restored. You tell me a thousand kind things of the desire you have to take a trip with me, where we might amuse ourselves with talking and reading together. Ah, would to God I could, by any chance, receive such a proof of your love! A lady told me the other day, that, with all your affection for me, you do not take half the advantage of it you might; and that you were even ignorant of my va-

* This is a very handsome house in the street Culture-Sainte-Catherine. Jean Gougeon, du Cerceau, and Mansard, successively displayed their genius there.

lue and importance with respect to yourself. It is a strange thing, perhaps, for me to tell you, but I have no desire to be agreeable, except that I may suit your taste, as much as I share your heart: the distinction, perhaps, is equally strange, but it is not impossible. Seriously, my child, and to put an end to this prating, I am more affected by your sentiments for me, than by those of all the world besides: I am sure you believe me.

I have sent to Corbinelli's; he is well, and will come and see me to-morrow. As for the poor abbé de Bayard, I can never get him out of my head, and have been talking of him the whole evening; I will let you know how madame de la Fayette bears it; she is, it seems, at Saint Maur. Madame de Coulanges is at Livri; I intend to go there whilst our house is getting ready. Madame de Guitaut has been brought to bed of a son, who died next day: it was once proposed to show her another child, and to make her believe they sent him to Epoisses. In short, it is a very odd affair, take it all together; her husband is come to try to console her. The lady of marshal d'Albert is dead, the courier is just now arrived that brought the news. But here comes Coulanges, who wants to chat with you.

FROM M. DE COULANGES.

So then, we are at last in possession of this peerless mother-beauty, who is more peerless and more beautiful than ever. You suppose she arrived quite fatigued: you suppose she has been keeping her bed. Nothing like it; she did me the honour to alight at my house, handsomer, younger, and more brilliant, than I can express; from that day till now she has been in a perpetual hurry, which has done her no harm, that is to say, her person; for her heart and soul are with you, and if ever

they make a trip, by way of visit to her body, it is to speak of that rare countess in Provence. What have we not said of her? and what have we not yet to say of her? What an immense volume could we make of her perfections! and what an immense size would even the table of contents be!

But, my lady countess, can you imagine you were only created for the people of Provence? You were certainly formed for the ornament of the court; you should certainly reside there, were it only for the sake of your affairs; and you should reside there, too, that I may have the pleasure of thanking you in person for the portraits you sent me; in short, you should reside there, in order to complete your mother's recovery: truly, fair countess, all your friends and servants wish for your return; prepare therefore for this important journey; sleep well; eat heartily; we will forgive you if you have not grown thin in our absence; think seriously, therefore, of your health, and believe me that no one can be more devoted to you, or more in your interests, than I am.

LETTER DXXVIII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Tuesday, October 12, 1677.

TRUE, my child; *when October ends, Allhallowtide is at the door**: I had thought of this three or four times, and was on the point of writing you the same piece of news, had not you prevented me. So then, this month too is past, which I am not at all sorry for. You know a lady who is always loath to change a *louis-d'or*, be-

* The French proverb is, "Quand Octobre prend sa fin, la Toussaint est au matin."

cause she finds silver equally inconvenient; this lady has more bags of a thousand francs each, than we have louis-d'ors. Let us follow the example in our economy. I must now, my dear, have a little chat with you, though I know this letter will not go to-day.

We are now removing; and as I know my people will do that business better than I can do it, I leave them all here, and keep out of the bustle. M. de Marseilles came to inquire for me the day after my arrival. Madame de Pomponne and madame de Vins came here yesterday, full of friendship for us both. Madame de Vins assured me of the good disposition of the bishop towards peace: he has, as you say, a different idea in his head, from what he had at Aix; and what puts it beyond all doubt, is, that he does not go to the assembly. I told you how little hope there is in regard to the affairs of our poor curate of Saint Esprit. M. de Guitaut, who is here, has strongly recommended this poor exile, and has openly taken him under his protection. He is under very great embarrassment, in respect to undeceiving his wife, who thinks her son at Epoisses*; he fears the effects the discovery of the child's death may have upon her. It is an odd affair; these sisters must have strange heads; though La Guitaut is possessed of a thousand good qualities, yet the labour her projects cost her appears in all she undertakes. I have been to see madame de la Fayette at Saint Maur; I was much pleased at her affliction for the loss of the good abbé Bayard; she cannot help speaking of it continually, nor can she at all reconcile herself to it. She lives wholly on a milk diet, and she has certainly the most delicate constitution possible. This is precisely, I fear, your case, my dear child, for you do not know how to nurse yourself.

* See Letter of the 7th of October.

as she does. Good heavens! what delight it will give me to behold, with my own eyes, that perfect state of health in you, which every body assures me of, and in regard to which you play the dissembler, and deceive me so completely when you please! It must be acknowledged there is a great deal of deceit in the world: such long letters! I cannot conceive how you can possibly contrive to write them. You are vexed at receiving three of mine at once. Pray, are they written at once? Cannot you discern that they are sometimes the work of several days?

I am by no means satisfied with the health of the cardinal (de Retz); I am certain, if he lives at Commercys*, he will not be there long: he kills himself with close application, which grieves me sadly. I easily conceive your affliction at the death of the young canon. I can think of nothing else. I see, as you do, the hand of Providence in the obstinacy of those who refused to let him have what would have cured him; he neglected taking an emetic, which would have saved him: the Scriptures must be fulfilled. We are always persuaded that it depends wholly on us to do this, or that: and we cannot be convinced, for example, of the impossibility of administering this emetic; because, whilst we omit doing any thing, we still believe it was in our power to have done it; and so the dispute will remain, till it be cleared up, with all other doubts, in the valley of Jehosaphat.

* Joly says that he employed himself in the genealogy of his family, or that he pretended to do so, his indolence rendering him incapable of any laborious researches. But Joly, who had lost his confidence, knew not that it was there he wrote his curious Memoirs, an occupation he took pleasure in concealing, by appearing surrounded with folio editions of the histories of noble families, of which he could with difficulty turn over the leaves.

I much approve of all your dinners at the several fountains; these changes are really admirable. Is M. de Grignan of the same opinion? Is he under a necessity of doing this to eat his holy bread? There never was, in the memory of man, such a long continuance of charming weather; and the rain seems quite forgotten: there are only some old men who dare venture to say they ever saw such weather; but no one believes them. Let me beg of you, my child, to make no scruple of talking to me of the Gospels of the day, of which every one's head is full. Good God! why should we not? Why all this restraint and reserve among friends? I deny it to be a fault; but if it really be, I desire never to be free from it as long as I live.

M. de Saint Herem has been perfectly adored at Fontainebleau, so well did he acquit himself in doing all the honours: only his wife took into her head to trick herself out at all points, not forgetting plenty of diamonds and pearls. She sent one day to borrow all madame de Soubise's jewels, thinking no doubt they would become her as well. The consequence was, she was laughed at by every one. Are there no such things in the world as friends or looking-glasses? The fair Ludre is still at Pouci with her heavenly charms. There is a distant murmuring as if *Quanto* had caught cold again, as she did last year.

Livri, Thursday evening.

I am come here to sleep, upon the heels of madame de Coulanges. The abbé Tetû is here, and the good Corbinelli. The weather is delightful. The *worthy* staid behind at Paris, with all my people, in order to remove: he has caught cold, which made him determine upon this. I shall return on Thursday with madame de Coulanges; I shall possibly sleep at her house that night,

till every thing is in order. Adieu, my love: the hope of seeing you, and the pleasure of expecting you, and of making you welcome, have a better effect on me than all the waters of Vichi, though I am far from having reason to be dissatisfied with them. The news about *Quanto* is false, and the fair Ludre is at Versailles with Monsieur and Madame. Every body here sends a thousand affectionate remembrances.

LETTER DXXIX.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Friday, October 15, 1677.

WE have been at Livri for these two days; madame de Coulanges, who is quite well, doing the honours of the house, and I the company. We had the abbé Teté and Corbinelli with us: mademoiselle de Meri, who was returning from La Trousse, came there too, thinking to spend some days with madame de Coulanges; but this lady has ended her campaign, and we all returned yesterday to Paris. Mademoiselle de Meri went directly to madame de Mereuil's, for her own house was, it seems, in complete disorder; and madame de Coulanges, the abbé Tetu, and I, paid some visits in the country, like madame de la Fayette at Saint Maur, and madame de Schomberg at Rambouillet. I thought of sleeping at madame de Coulanges's, but for that night only. I returned here to visit the good abbé, who has been bled, and is still much indisposed with his cold; I am sorry I could not help leaving him for this little moment. We live quite in the open air; all my people as busy as bees in packing up for our removal. I encamped in my own bed-chamber; and am now in that of the worthy, my whole furniture being a little table,

on which I now write to you, and that is sufficient : I fancy we shall all be pleased with our hotel de Carnavalet. We think it strange not to have seen Termes, though we have been home these nine days : it is easy to guess he has returned to his college, and that his regent gives him not a moment's relaxation. I am not at all sorry, as you may very well suppose, and shall not reproach him for it : but ask the chevalier, whether, after the great pleasure he took in talking with me at Vichi, such extreme indifference be not very singular. It would certainly be very indiscreet, if the lady stood in need of being directed ; and such conduct would be something to talk of : but it is impossible to do her any injury. I thought he seemed quite delighted at Vichi, on account of the vacation, as you say, and to be with a good sort of woman, in full assurance of having no demands made upon him. This repose charmed him : there is sometimes great pleasure in passing from one extreme to another. He was mightily taken with the perpetual gossip of Vichi : you see what the consequence of this has been, at which I am under no sort of concern, but I tell it you as I do a thousand things else. When excess and imprudence are pushed to a certain extreme, I am persuaded they are more injurious to men than women ; at least their fortunes are always sure to pay considerably for it. But let us leave Termes under the ferula ; there is a good deal to be said of another *old ferula**, which discovers its severity too much. As for you, my child, you enjoy a real vacation, and

* This *old ferula* is apparently the marchioness de Castelnau, who was long and publicly the mistress of M. de Termes. The *Amours des Gaules*, in which this is found, have very much defamed this marquis. If this part was written by Bussy as well as the rest, he must have been very wicked, for his letters show that the marquis de Termes was his

make an admirable use of the fine weather ; to dine at home in your own house is a very extraordinary affair : you write to me from Rochecourbière—what a pretty place to date from ! what a delightful grotto ! How amiable you are, to remember me at that delightful place, and to be sorry I am not there to share its pleasures with you ! Let us leave Providence to dispose of affairs at its pleasure : we shall see one another again, my love ; in the mean time I shall prepare to receive you at Carnavalet, where I shall again have the pleasure of rendering you a thousand little services, which are of no real importance ; but I am happy in the opportunity, because you wrote me word the other day, that little attentions were a stronger proof of friendship than any other ; it is true, we cannot set too high a value upon them : self-love has certainly too large a share in what we do on great occasions. *Tender interest is swallowed up in pride* ; this is an idea of yours which I would not for the world deprive you of, as I find my account in it but too well.

I am, in regard to the loss of Bayard, precisely in the same disposition you guessed I was. Madame de la Fayette is utterly inconsolable. I have presented your compliments to her. She was then living on a milk diet, which she has discontinued on account of its turning acid on her stomach ; so that we have lost this sole ground of hope of the recovery of her desperate state of health. That of M. de Maine is certainly far from being good. He is at Versailles, where no one has seen him ; they say he walks worse than he did. In short, I really fancy there is something in it. Madame de

steady friend. He also possessed all the requisites to excite his jealousy. He was one of those in whom Boileau acknowledged a superior mind, " M. de Termes," said he, " is always of the opinion of others, and this is true politeness." (Vide la Boleana).

Montespan went the other day to sleep at Maintenon, thinking at first of only going half-way there, in order to meet madame de Maintenon. The king got into his carriage at midnight, to meet madame de Montespan, when he received a courier, who informed him she was at Maintenon. She returned next day; all this passed for a ramble, as it often happens. The countess de Grammont is talked of, as one of the ephemera.

Mademoiselle de Thianges* will be married by proxy by M. de Lavardin for the duke of Sforza, in a month or six weeks. It is a strange affair to leave the place where she now resides, in order to be in one of the most inconsiderable courts in Italy. You may possibly ask me, why does M. de Lavardin espouse her? It is because he is related to that duke, and has been chosen to represent him. La Bagnols informs me she does not go to Grignan, and that you will be under the necessity of parting with madame de Rochebonne and the chevalier. So then it seems you walk by moon-light. So much the better, my child; it is a sign you are in good health, since you are suffered to do so. Is it possible to form a more advantageous opinion of those who have a real affection for you, and who take care of your health? My health is perfectly good; I am still in hopes we shall pass some little time after this at Livri, but then it must be when the *worthy* is perfectly recovered. I embrace M. de Grignan and M. de la Garde: I conjure you, if you really intend to come, not to wait till the breaking up of these horrible roads. I fancy the wind begins to blow with an *autumnal* sharpness, as the almanack says. Pray where do you leave your son? I cannot easily comprehend how you dispose of

* Louise Adelaide Damas, daughter of Claude Léonor marquis de Thianges, and Gabrielle Rochecouart-Mortemar.

that vicar of Saint Esprit. Does he come to Grignan? You know how severe they are on the poor curate. And Paulina? I should be glad to *patronise* her. I am uneasy, like you, respecting her godfather*; this thought is perfectly afflicting to me. You cannot conceive what a loss this would be. We ought to pray that God will preserve him to us. He fatigues, exhausts, and absolutely destroys himself; he is never free from a slow fever; I think no one is so much concerned on his account as I am. In short, except a quarter of an hour that he is employed in feeding his trouts, he passes his time in philosophical quibbles and subtilties with don Robert, which entirely destroy him. You will perhaps say, "Why does he destroy himself thus?" But what the plague would you have him do with himself? In vain does he bestow a certain portion of his time in the concerns of the church; he has still too much left. Adieu, my dear child! adieu, all my dear Grignans! They are taking away my ink-stand, my paper, my table, and my chair. O then, pack up as fast as you will, I am on my legs.

The young Mademoiselle† has a quartan ague, for which she is very sorry, as it interrupts all the pleasures of this winter. She was the other day at the convent of the Carmelites; she asked them, whether they had any cure for an ague; she had neither governess nor subgoverness with her. They gave her a beverage that caused her to vomit a good deal; which occasioned a great deal of conversation. The princess wanted to conceal who had given her this remedy, which was at last discovered. The king said, turning with an air of gravity to Monsieur, "Ah, the Carmelites!

* Cardinal de Retz.

† Mary Louisa d'Orleans, afterwards queen of Spain in 1679.

I knew they were a set of cheats, stocking-menders, embroiderers, and flower-makers, but I never knew before that they dealt in poison." The earth trembled at these words; all the devotees fled into the country; the queen was very little moved at it; in short, what is said cannot be recalled, any more than we can alter the belief and sentiments of the public, who pretend to a right to criticise every thing that is said or done. This must be allowed to be somewhat original.

The *worthy* embraces you: I really think him far from well. Had we been at Grignan, it would have been a fine affair. My writing is bad; but my pen is worse; it scrawls, and makes nothing but pot-hooks and hangers, so here it goes, with the other rubbish.

LETTER DXXX.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Wednesday, October 20, 1677.

THE chevalier certainly raves, and knows not what he says. I ate no fruit at Vichi, because there was no fruit there to eat. I dine in a wholesome manner; and if foolish people would have me sup just after dinner, at six, before my dinner is digested, I laugh at their proposal, and let it alone till eight: but on what do you think I sup? why, on a quail, or at most the wing of a partridge. I walk out, I acknowledge; and if people would have me stay at home, they ought to decry the fine weather. I have never been abroad during the evening dews; it is all scandal: in short, let me tell you M. Ferraud was always of my opinion, was often with me in my walks, and never opposed me in any thing. What do you mean then, chevalier? But pray, sir, with all your wisdom, does that arm of yours

take to comfort him, it would certainly cost him very little to do so.

It is said that M. du Maine is not so ill as he was supposed to be; there is now no uneasiness; but every thing is so liable to change, that before you have received this letter, there may have been both clouds and sunshine. Madame de Coulanges is at Versailles; I shall give her your letter as soon as she returns, and will tell you what she says. I embrace all the dear Grignans: I have been scolding the chevalier; and to make it up with him, must embrace him twice. I wish you had some water in your river; this is the season in which you must want it. The good company (M. de Termes) with whom I passed the Loire so merrily, has not been able to leave his class to come here. I must be well recommended, as Vardes said. I have given your compliments to madame de la Fayette. I was yesterday at Saint Maur: the weather was divine. I have received a letter from our cardinal; I was really extremely uneasy about his health; he informs me he is better, and I thank Providence that he is so. Corbinelli is far from well yet; his potable gold has dried him up. I fancy he, too, must be put upon a milk diet. Good night, my beautiful dear.

LETTER DXXXI.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Friday, October 22, 1677.

I HAVE no letter to answer, as this is not my day. I now write to you in the apartment of madame de Coulanges, at whose house I still am: she returned yesterday from Versailles, where every thing is as usual. Ma-

dame de Ludre*, fair and unfortunate, looked very coldly upon her, by which she did not ingratiate herself with madame de Montespan, although the fawning crew would have been glad that she had shewn how generously she had drawn that contempt upon herself; she never makes these little miseries for herself. M. de la Trousse† remains on the frontier to take charge of the conquered places: this is a favourite's employ, and is what marshal de Rochefort had before him: La Trousse follows his steps. M. de Louvois asked pardon of madame de Coulanges for having deprived her of the pleasure of so agreeable a companion for the winter: she bore the attack well, though surrounded by the court of France, did not blush, and answered just as she ought. Marshal de Grammont is arrived, and has been received by the king as usual; he is precisely the same man as ever. D'Hacqueville went to meet him, and conducted him to court. In short, there are no changes of any kind. Mademoiselle de Thianges is delighted at the thoughts of going to Italy‡; she is to be married in a month; you will then be here. People were disposed to believe, that M. de Louvigny was in love with the grand-duchess, and that the Janneton, *the fool*, who deserves no such appellation, was the go-between on the occasion. The king said, the grand-

* A few months after, this beauty, mortified at the king's insensibility, or at the tricks of the jealous Montespan, threw herself into a convent in Lorraine, from whence no effort was made to withdraw her. She lived there a long time, employing her old age in promoting the fortunes of her nephews.

† Philip Augustus le Hardi, marquis de la Trousse, was first-cousin to M. de Coulanges, to whose wife he was supposed to be very strongly attached.

‡ See Letter of October 15.

duchess would then be a little oftener at Montmartre*. The queen prevented *the fool* from being discarded; perhaps not a word of this is true, though it must be confessed the report is not to the credit of either. Madame de Coetquen is with child; if you are inclined to laugh at the news, you have my free consent. Madame T. has found favour in the sight of madame de Montespan, who saw her at Bourbon last year, and procured an abbey of twenty thousand livres a year for one of her sisters: this woman is so unworthy, in all respects, of the favours conferred upon her, that there are great murmurs. I am now got into the track of news. This letter, methinks, savours a little of Copenhagen, which will remind you very agreeably of my good marchioness de Lavardin †.

* Other letters of the same time prove that this report was a mere court intrigue. Madame de Montespan, who feared the power of this princess over the king, was accused as being the author of it. Bussy wrote upon the subject as follows: "It is not the example of the grand-duchess alone, which makes me despise courtiers, and almost the whole world, in seeing how she is calumniated since she has been on ill terms with madame de Montespan. The example of the prince is still more striking. For the first prince of the blood, and the greatest captain of his age, is thought less of than if he were dead, because he is not in favour at court, and that great robber Louvois is its idol —!"

It is said she only quitted Tuscany, and her husband, on the faith of her horoscope. The person who drew it, assured her she was destined to govern the king. Her sister, mademoiselle de Montpensier, records this trait of the superstition of the times. Every one knows that at the birth of Lewis XIV. his horoscope was taken.

† Margaret Renée de Rostaing, mother of Henry Charles de Beaumanior, marquis of Lavardin. This lady was extremely fond of news.

LETTER * DXXXII.

MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO THE COUNT DE BUSSY.

Paris, October 23, 1677.

I RETURNED from Vichi four days ago. I brought with me an affectionate remembrance of your friendship, of your charming conversation, of the beauty of Chaseu, and of the merit of my niece de Coligny, whom I admire and love †. Among so many good things, I regret that I did not ask you to show me your Memoirs, which suit my taste exactly. I cannot imagine how I could forget it. I am very glad that you found something to say to me on your side. Your love then was rekindled in seeing me? It is a good sign when friendship is increased by meeting. For my part, I think we love each other more than we suppose. This P**** was rather disagreeable, God have mercy on her soul. It was necessary, as you say, to quarter well with her: When she was at the point of death last year, I said, seeing her sad recovery and decrepitude: "Good Heavens! she will die twice in a short time." Was I not right? Patrix ‡ was recovering from a very severe fit of illness at the age of eighty; his friends were one day rejoicing at the event, and entreated him to get up: "Alas, gentlemen," said he, "it is scarcely worth while to dress myself again." How delighted I was, my dear

† Madame de Sévigné had spent the beginning of September with M. de Bussy.

‡ Patrix was a literary man attached to Gaston d'Orleans, the brother of Lewis XIII. He died at a very advanced age. He was the author of the well known epigram,

"Je songeais cette nuit que, de mort consumé," &c.

I dreamt that, buried in my fellow-clay, &c.

cousin, with this reply ! But I fear I have already told you the story. Well thought of : you wish me to condole with you on the death of the grand-prior of Champagne. I am very willing to do so, and if I should add some others, I am certain my consolation would have all the efficacy imaginable. Do you remember what you once said to me on a similar subject ? that you had waited a long time for my letter, but having seen it was slow in coming, you consoled yourself alone as well as you could. My coachman was comforted by the lamentable story of M. Jannin's overturn. It was a fine affair in comparison of ours. I was informed of it upon the road, and wrote to M. Jannin ; for a fracture deserves a compliment. I have laughed heartily with Corbinelli at the way in which our two uncles fell upon my niece Coligny and myself. Our poor Corbinelli has been near death ! He took potable gold, which saved his life by throwing him into a perspiration, that carried off his fever. There is nothing like being rich : a beggar would have died.

They talk of a sort of victory obtained by marshal de Crequi *. He has beaten the Germans. Did you ever hear of so brilliant a star as the king's ? You know he has given a pension of two thousand crowns to Racine and Despréaux, commanding them at the same time to write his history, and he will take care to furnish them with materials. Adieu, my dear cousin.

* On the 24th of September, marshal de Crequi obliged the prince of Saxony and Senac, general of the troops of the Circles, to surrender. (*Mémoires chronologiques de d'Avrigny*). He also obtained another less important advantage on the 7th of October.

LETTER * DXXXIII,

THE COUNT DE BUSSY TO MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Bussy, October 27, 1677.

YOUR letter, madam, has given me as much pleasure as I am accustomed to receive when I hear from you, and which I expect before I break the seal. I shall not go to Paris till next year. I hope to bring you what you wish to see. You have this pleasure in anticipation, if pleasure it can be called. You said truly, madam, when old P**** recovered last year, that it was only to die twice, with a short interval between; and I add, that she would have very much obliged us, if she had died out of hand, without taking the trouble, as Patrix said, of dressing herself again. I am glad our friend Corbinelli has escaped this wretched business, and that he owes the obligation to gold. If they could always agree thus, I should be still better pleased. I think it will not be our friend's fault, for he is certainly not ungrateful. But when you say, in remarking that potable gold has cured him, *that there is nothing like being rich, and that a beggar would have died*, the present age, who knows him, will understand the contrary; but posterity, which takes every thing in the literal sense, will suppose him to be one of Fortune's favourites. The advantage marshal de Crequi has obtained near Saverne, is little in effect, and a great deal in reputation. Despréaux and Racine will, no doubt, make the most of the noble deeds of the king. I should like much to see their performance.

LETTER DXXXIV.

MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO THE COUNTESS DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Wednesday, October 27, 1677.

I SHALL no longer, my child, ask you why. In three words, my horses are thin, my tooth is loose, and my preceptor has got the king's evil. All this is dreadful. One might well make three grievances of these three answers, and especially of the second. I shall not ask you, after this, whether your watch goes right, for you will then tell me it is broken. Paulina answers much better than you do; nothing can be more amusing than the little rogueries she means to be guilty of, when she says, she will be a *rogue some day or other herself*. Ah, how sorry I am that I cannot see this dear child! I fancy you will soon console me for this; if you pursue the plan I have laid down to you, you will set out at farthest in a week, and will not receive this letter at Grignan. M. de Coulanges is set out to-day by the stage-coach for Lyons, where you will find him; he will inform you how delightfully we are accommodated. There was no hesitation in choosing the upper part of the house for you and me, and the lower for M. de Grignan and his daughters; so that all will be perfectly well.

I recommend to all your Grignans, who are so careful of your health, to see that you do not fall into the Rhone, by the cruel pleasure you take in exposing yourself to its greatest dangers. I entreat them to turn cowards, and to land with you. I find, besides, that I shall be very happy to administer to you some of my chicken-broth; the place you desire at my table, you may be assured is yours; the regimen which your Grignans prescribe for you, is my ordinary fare: I agree

with Grisoni to banish all ragouts. Come away then, my beloved child; your physicians do not forbid you from being received with a heart filled with the most unfeigned affection; be assured that on this side only I shall entertain you with many magnificent repasts.

I am glad to find you disposed as you are towards M. de Marseilles; oh! how much better is this, and how much wickedness and appearance of animosity there is in retaining rancour for so long a time! it ought certainly to cease with its cause; and why, indeed, should we foster a resentment, so injurious both in this world and the world to come? All that vexes M. de Grignan is, to find that your physician has more influence over you than your confessor. The chevalier is very facetious, in wishing to prevent the north-east wind from blowing; it will reach his castle before he himself can, and will chase him before he can chase it. The chancellor* is dead of old age. I have a thousand things to tell you, but these I reserve till I see you: good heavens, what a pleasure is this! I wish the potable gold may prove serviceable to the handsome Rochebonne. There is no medicine, however disagreeable, that madame de Sanzei would not take to be cured†. Our poor cardinal's fever returns continually; you ought to join your entreaties to ours, to bring him away from so bad an air; he cannot possibly live long, on account of this constant fever; my heart feels for him.

M. le Tellier‡ is now chancellor; I like this extremely; it is good to die possessed of dignity.

[*N. B. Madame de Grignan remained at Paris from the end of October 1677 till September 1679, when she set out for Provence.*]

* Etienne d'Aligre.

† Of a deafness.

‡ M. le Tellier was then aged seventy-four. He died on the 28th of October 1685.

LETTER * DXXXV.

MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO THE COUNT DE BUSSY.

Livri, November 3, 1677.

I AM come here to pass the fine weather, and bid adieu to the leaves: they are still upon the trees, but have changed their hue: instead of being green they are of the colour of Aurora, and of so many different shades, that they form a rich and magnificent gold drapery, which would be more beautiful than green, if it did not portend their fall. I am at Carnavalet's. It is a large handsome house; I wish to remain there some time, for the removal has fatigued me a good deal. I am in expectation of the beautiful countess, who will be very glad to hear that you have not forgotten her. What you say of Despréaux and Racine is very just. The king said to them, a few days ago, "I am sorry you were not at the last campaign: you would have seen the war, and your journey would not have been very long." "Sire," said Racine, "we had no dress ready for the campaign, ours were only fit for the town; but we ordered some to be made, and the places you attacked were taken before they could be brought home." This was very well received. You know the king has appointed M. le Tellier chancellor; every body is pleased at this choice. He is perfectly competent to his situation. What a fortunate family this has been! my niece, de Coligny, ought to be very happy. Still there is a little quartan ague that shows but too plainly she is one of us. What you say of old P****, who ought to have died out of hand when she was ill a short time before her death, has been more than a match for me. I am not yet satisfied that we did not read your Memoirs

the afternoon we spent on the banks of that pretty river. I shall hardly be able to dispense with them till next year. If I die in the interval, I shall add this to my other regrets at leaving the world. The good abbé and I often talk of your hospitality, of the beautiful situation of Chaseu, and of the charms of your society ; and add, that it is grievous that we should meet so rarely.

LETTER * DXXXVI.

THE COUNT DE BUSSY TO MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Bussy, November 6, 1677.

I APPROVE your taste, madam, in preferring the different tints of autumn to the verdure of spring ; but I trace a little vanity in this opinion : it is artfully confessing that you have more merit than young persons ; and, faith, you are right, for youth is only green, and we of the more advanced season are of a hundred thousand different colours, every one more beautiful than the rest.

I doubt not that M. le Tellier will discharge the duties of chancellor, as well as he has done those of secretary of state. You have reason to exclaim at the good fortune of this family : nothing can exceed it. You say justly, that madame de Coligny ought to be very happy. It is true, her happiness proceeds more from her moderation than her great riches ; and you are also right in saying, that her age shows she is one of us. She feels this too, and is mortified at it. Alexander knew by his being wounded that he was not, as he supposed, the son of Jupiter. You shall see what you so much wish to see ; but do not anticipate too much pleasure from it, for I should find it a very difficult task to answer your expectations.

LETTER * DXXXVII.

MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO THE COUNT DE BUSSY.

Paris, December 8, 1677.

My daughter is here † ; but as there is no happiness in this world without alloy, the pleasure of seeing her is overcast by the grief of finding her in ill health. Figure to yourself this dear little person whom you have so often admired, become so thin, pale, and delicate, that she is quite a different being ; and her health is so altered, that I cannot think of it without real uneasiness. This is what God had in store for me, in returning my daughter to my hands. I could make reflections upon the subject, from this time till to-morrow. But it is better to inquire after our widow, how her fever is, and if the winter, in addition to this evil, does not interrupt the tranquillity of her life. No one is exempt from sorrows of some kind. I recommend her to you, and you to her. The happiness of your mutual society can alone soften your pains. Can you suppose that I know no news? The capture of Fribourg has filled us with joy and pride, and has obliged the gazetteer of Holland to own frankly that he has not a word to say on the subject of the king's campaign: that three large towns taken, a battle gained, and Fribourg conquered, to bid adieu to the Germans ‡, is so extraordinary a succession of good fortune, that it is only worthy of admiration. I think this very good. Adieu, my dear

† Madame de Grignan remained at Paris about a year and six months.

‡ Fribourg, ill-defended, was taken on the 14th of November, after five days of open trenches.

cousin, let us continue to love one another, we cannot do better. I say the same to my niece.

LETTER * DXXXVIII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, February 8, 1678.

WE have read the fragment of your Memoirs with great pleasure. I cannot, at present, make the use of it I wish, because the court, as you know, is not here; but be assured that, in a general way, I lose no opportunity of doing my best for you. Our friend Corbinelli has written to tell you his opinion of your style, which is admirable. It is impossible to be more interested about you than we both are.

We are now in the most glorious uncertainty possible. We believe in an armistice, and in the continuance of hostilities, twenty times in an hour. Politics are the order of the day, and the arguments on both sides are inexhaustible.

M. de Grignan, who is just come from Provence, is returning back again, and those who have places in the provinces are obliged to do the same. My daughter is in better health than she was. I am commissioned with the salutations of the whole family, the good abbé's, my son's, in short of *tutti quanti* (all the rest), and I embrace the amiable widow, and her dear father, affectionately: this is one of the occupations of my heart and my mind.

LETTER * DXXXIX.

M. DE CORBINELLI TO THE COUNT DE BUSSY †.

WE have read, sir, with real pleasure, your campaign of Mardick. I cannot help admiring the ease which is diffused throughout your work ; but what strikes me still more particularly, is the freedom from affectation and useless things in your style ; upon which subject, if you were to kill me for it, I could not forbear to cite the master of this species of writing, the divine Horace, whose precepts you adopt from experience and nature, more than from himself; though he only derived them from these two sources :

Est brevitæ opus, ut currat sententiæ, nec se
Impediat verbis lassas onerantibus aures.

I have never met with a writer who answers his idea so completely, and so fully proves it, as yourself. I translate the word *sententiæ* by the word *idea*, for you know better than I do, that this is more frequently its signification, and I assert that Horace did not recommend brevity merely in what we call a *sentence*. Your style has this excellent quality which our master recommends, as well as that of adapting the expressions to the subject, in which few persons are successful, and which, in my opinion, and to my taste, is the greatest charm of your writing. Your words, as Petronius says, are of the colour of your thoughts, and are neither more strong nor more lively. I must add another word or two of Latin, for we learned men like to make use of it in every way, when a fit occasion offers ; in which we differ

† This Letter, announced in the preceding one, is sufficiently interesting, and we trust the reader will not be sorry to find it here.

from pedants, who use it indiscriminately on all occasions. "Ne sententiæ," says Petronius, "emineant extra corpus orationis expressæ, sed intexto vestibus colore niteant." What is your opinion of the historical style? Mascardi and Vossius say, that it should be as pompous and magnificent as that of heroic poetry. Strada differs from them. The two first bring Titus Livius, Tacitus, and Sallust, as examples. But I am so much afraid of being tempted to quote Latin again, that I abandon the question. My compliments, if you please, to your divine daughter, whom I perfectly adore.

LETTER * DXL.

THE COUNT DE Bussy TO M. DE CORBINELLI.

Bussy, February 22, 1678.

I know not, sir, what answer we ought to make to the praises that are addressed to us of ourselves; for besides the expression, *you jest*, being too common, I should not like to be so uncivil as to contradict you, particularly in this instance. I must therefore say to you, as to madame de Sévigné, that I am delighted to please you. I will now reply to your question of my opinion respecting the historical style. I wish it to be concise and clear, for otherwise it is tedious, however heroic and noble may be the events it records. I have read Tacitus; he appears to me concise, but he is obscure, and always artificial. When the style is invariably pompous and magnificent, I maintain that it must weary the reader.

LETTER *DXLI.

MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO THE COUNT DE BUSSY.

Paris, March 18, 1678.

WHAT say you, my dear cousin, to the conquest of Gand? A king of France had not been seen there for a long time. Our present sovereign is so admirable, that he deserves to have you for his historian. There needs neither fable nor fiction to raise him above all other kings; nothing is necessary but a plain unvarnished style, like yours. This is continually in my head.

The king's historians follow the army. They are little accustomed to fatigue. I am informed that they are very much surprised at finding themselves both on foot and on horseback, in mud to their very ears; they now know by experience how little pleasure there is in sleeping under the rays of the beautiful mistress of Endymion. They pay their court by the astonishment they express at the numerous legions which compose the formidable army of the king. They are all surprised too at fatigues which are but too real, and under this impression they said the other day to the king, that they no longer wondered that soldiers so easily hazarded their lives, since they had reason to wish them at an end. They are also punsters. For instance: the king dislikes perfumes, but the Spanish glove † he has taken, they say, will not give him the head-ache. I add, that a prince less wise and great would probably not be free from giddiness on such an occasion. These are poor things to tell you, my dear cousin, but my pen has written them all without my consent.

† Gand, the name of the place, is French for glove.

They are now before Ypres *, and I am alarmed at it, for this place is crammed with soldiers, though two thousand men have left it to go to Bruges, because they know not where the king may fall. Every town trembles. With all this we shall have peace, I suppose, or Flanders.

But a word of madame de Seignelai, who died the day before yesterday in childbed with a son. Fortune has struck a bold stroke in thus daring to offend M. Colbert. He and all his family are inconsolable. What an ample subject for reflection! This great heiress so much wished for, and secured at length under such a variety of circumstances, is dead at the age of eighteen. *The Princess of Clèves* has scarcely lived longer; but she will not be so soon forgotten. This is a little book Barbin gave us ten days ago, which appears to me one of the most charming things I have ever read. I suppose my niece, the canoness, will send it to you soon. I shall ask your opinion of it when you and the amiable widow have read it. It seems too soon for you to go to Chasen. Are not your meadows and your pretty river still frozen? You have certainly taken four or five days of March sun-shine for summer, but they will soon show you as they have shown us, that they are gay deceivers.

I know not how you can like my letters; they are written in a style of carelessness, which I feel, without being able to remedy it. But the reason is more distant, and proceeds from your love of me. You do well, my dear cousin, and I conjure you to persevere without fearing that you love one who is ungrateful. I say the

* Ypres was taken as well as Gand. These victories, together with those obtained in Germany by marshal de Crequi, and by marshal de Navailles in Spain, determined the conclusion of peace, which was signed at Nimeguen, on the 11th of August following. It was the most glorious peace France had ever made, at this epocha.

same to you, my dear niece. Send me an account of your amusements, and what you are reading. This it is that consoles us for the irksomeness of solitude. But is either of you to be pitied? No, indeed; you have society enough in each other when you are together. I like La Hire, and his reply to his master, exceedingly. It is very elegant and well-turned †. I think you would have said the same thing to Charles VII.; for with regard to our present king, you have no reason to say so to him. My daughter is a little better; she sends a thousand remembrances to you and my niece.

LETTER *DXLII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, June 20, 1678.

WHAT folly it is, not to write to you, since I take the first step towards it daily, by thinking of you! When we have no good reason, it is best to make none. So peace, my dear cousin, is concluded. The king thought it more glorious to give it this year to Europe, than to take Flanders: he reserves that for another time. Are you at that delightful spot, Chaseu? I have the picture of the country still in my mind, and I shall keep it there carefully; but much more the delightful father and delightful daughter, who have their place in my heart. What a number of delightfals! But this is one of the negligences I cannot correct myself of. I hope, if my letters are worth reading a second time, that some charitable person will be found, who will correct them

† "What think you of my dance?" said Charles the Seventh, to this warrior. "I think, sire," replied he, "that a kingdom could not have been lost more merrily." This is mentioned by Bussy in his letter.

for me. Our friend Corbinelli is gone in search of M. de Vardes, to induce him to take advantage of the permission the king has granted M. de Rohan to marry his daughter. This marriage is a pleasant thing for de Vardes, and especially as nothing is said of his situation, which will be sold to another person some day, in conformity to the king's pleasure.

Madame de Monaco has left the world with a very equivocal contrition, and difficult to distinguish from the pain of a severe illness. She was quite disfigured before her death, being wasted away to such a degree, that every feature in her face was altered. Adieu, my dear cousin. How do you like the Princess of Cleves? I embrace my niece: I love her, and entreat you both to love me always.

LETTER *DXLIII.

THE COUNT DE BUSSY TO MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Bussy, June 18, 1678.

I HAVE been informed that madame de Monaco is just dead, and that her father, marshal de Grammont, did nothing but jest with her when she was dying. Do you like jests addressed to, or made by, persons on a death-bed, my dear cousin? For my part, I cannot endure them. "Draw the curtain, the farce is played: adieu baskets, the vintage is over: we must pack up." All this makes my heart sick, and if I could endure it in persons who were indifferent, I should think it inhuman from a father to a child. I do not know whether you have heard that madame Fouquet has paid a visit to the bishop of Autun. Like a polite and well-bred man he paid her as much respect as if she had still been the

lady of the superintendent of finances. He went to meet her with six coaches, and two hundred of the city horse; for, as I was there, I know the amount †.

The lady was very glad to see me, and told me M. d'Autun did too much honour to an unfortunate woman like her. I told her he shared the honour himself: I know not whether she understood me. I thought her as blooming as ever, though she is eighteen years older.

I hear that cardinal de Retz, whom we never expected to see again till the day of judgement, is at the hotel de Lesdiguières, surrounded by the most select company in France. Explain this to me, madam; for his return seems to injure his retreat. I cannot tell you how much the *vedova felice* (happy widow) ‡ and I love you; it exceeds, not imagination, but expression.

LETTER * DXLIV.

MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO THE COUNT DE BUSSY.

Paris, June 27, 1678.

I BELIEVE I was writing to you at the time you were reproaching me very justly for not having written to you. You see how I reproached myself for it. You flatter me highly in saying, that the more delicate you become, the more necessary I am to you. How can I be insensible to this well-seasoned compliment? I sent you news of myself, and of my daughter: she has been ill, but bleeding has restored her. Would to God that peace was so generally established in all hearts, as to bring back those I wish to the court! you would certainly be the first and only one, if one only was to be

† Allusion to a verse of Marot.

‡ Madame de Coligny.

recalled, though you are not the most unhappy. You have society under your roof, and a neighbourhood that exempts you from being dull.

Madame de Monaco had no feature nor trace remaining by which she could have been recognised when she died. It was a death's head spoiled by a black and withered skin : in short, it was so great a mortification to her, that if God had wished her to turn it to her advantage, he need not have imposed on her any other penance. She displayed a good deal of fortitude, and, Bourdaloue says, of Christianity.

You know cardinal de Retz wished to resign his hat. The pope would not accept his resignation, and was not only offended at his wishing to go to Paradise without the dignity of his rank, but forbade him to make any stay at Commercy, the place he had chosen for his residence, saying, A cardinal is not allowed to take up his abode any where but in his own abbey. This is the custom of Rome ; so that no one may become a hermit *al dispetto del papa* (in defiance of the pope). Commercy, therefore, being one of the greatest thoroughfares, he is come to live at Saint Denis, where he passes his life in strict conformity to the seclusion he has laid down to himself. He was for some time at the hotel de Lesdiguières : but this house was, in a manner, become his own*. The friends of the duke no longer dined there, but the friends of the cardinal. He saw very few people, and has been for more than two months at Saint Denis. He has a cause to be tried, the decision of which will complete the payment of his debts or not, as it may turn out. You know he has paid off eleven hundred thousand crowns. No one furnished him with this example, and no one will follow it.

* Madame de Lesdiguières was his niece.

In short, you will see that he will persist in his enterprise. He is much more strict than he was in Lorraine, and he is always deserving the utmost respect. Those who wish to dispense with showing it, would have done the same, whether he had staid at Commercy, or returned to Saint Denis †. Adieu, my dear cousin; I am very glad that you and the amiable widow love me. If you could see how my heart is disposed towards you, you would find your love was not bestowed in vain.

LETTER * DXLV.

FROM THE COUNT DE BUSSY TO MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Bussy, June 29, 1678.

IF I knew, madam, how to season praises as well as you say I do, I should often bestow them on you, in order to obtain yours; I would also bestow some occasionally on the king, because he deserves them.

I am very glad you have explained cardinal de Retz's conduct to me, which, at a distance, appeared to be changed; for I wish to esteem him, and it makes me think he will sustain the beauty of his retreat to the end.

But I forgot to tell you, that I have at length read the Princess of Clèves in the true spirit of equity, pre-

† Madame de Sévigné, the friend of the cardinal, did not discover the whole. The new pope had acted friendly towards him, by limiting his retirement to the gates of Paris. This curious article is found in one of Bussy's letters: "I am informed that cardinal de Retz is finishing his penance at the house of madame de Bracciano (afterwards the celebrated princess des Ursins); that being the case, I do not despair of seeing the abbé de la Trappe return, to sigh for some courtly dame: and if the way the cardinal takes is the road to Paradise, the abbé is a great fool not to leave the one he has adopted for that purpose."

judiced neither by the good nor ill that has been said of it. I thought the first part excellent, but the second much inferior. In the first volume, with the exception of a few words too often repeated, of which the instances, however, are not very numerous, every thing is pleasing and natural. In the second, the confession of madame de Clèves to her husband is extravagant, and can only take place in a true history; but when we write one for amusement, it is ridiculous to give the heroine so extraordinary a feeling. The author, in doing it, thought more of making his romance differ from other romances, than of following good sense. A wife seldom tells her husband that another is in love with her, but never that she is in love with another, and much less, by throwing herself at his knees as the princess does, gives him reason to believe, that she has kept no bounds in the outrage she has committed against him. Nor is it probable, that the passion of love should have remained so long in the heart, and with the same degree of energy, as virtue; since at court, if a woman be assailed, and have not taken the side of rigour, in a fortnight, three weeks, or a month, she holds off merely to enhance the value of her favours. And if, against appearances and against custom, this combat of love and virtue should last in her heart till the death of her husband, she would then be delighted to reconcile them together, by marrying a man of his rank, the best made and the handsomest chevalier of the age. The first adventure in the gardens of Coulommiers is improbable, and savours of romance. Is it likely, that the first time the princess makes the confession to her husband of her love for another, this M. de Nemours should be in the very nick of time behind a palisade, where he hears the whole? I see no reason that he

should know it at all, and, in any case, a different method should have been taken to inform him of it.

It also savours too much of romance, to make the characters talk alone; for, besides its being unusual to talk to oneself, we could not know what a person had said unless he had written his history, and he would only say what he had thought. The letter to madame de Chartres is also in the style of romance, obscure, too long, and not at all natural. Meanwhile, every thing in the second volume is as well told, and the expressions are as beautiful, as in the first.

LETTER * DXLVI.

FROM MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO THE COUNT DE BUSSY.

Paris, July 25, 1678.

I CONFESS, my dear cousin, that I little knew the interest you took in those, whom I found an opportunity to oblige. I am happy that an honest man should wish a favour which depended upon me. I was on the point of thanking him for having accepted it, when I found it was in my power to obtain an acknowledgment from you. But I will not deceive you, my dear cousin, nor enhance the value of an action which is not worth the pains, and which I did not perform for your sake.

I agree with you in all you say of the princess of Clèves. Your critique and mine were cast in the same mould. We are a little premature in praising the king for a peace which is not yet certain. Adieu, good cousin; pretty widow, adieu.

LETTER * DXLVII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, August 9, 1678.

THE idea of peace is again resumed by every one. The king of Sweden has desired the king to make it, without paying any further attention to his interests. The Dutch keep clear of this negotiation, and it is here supposed, that the praises in prose and verse which have been written on the king will not now be out of place. But what say you of M. d'Albret, who went amorously and nocturnally to the campaign to visit madame de Lameth? He was taken for a robber, and killed upon the spot. What a strange adventure †!

† "The death of M. d'Albret," says Bussy in answer to this letter, "in the field of battle, would have been more glorious, but this makes more noise; and will be longer remembered." It should be added that M. d'Albret was not taken for a robber, but was really assassinated by M. de Lameth, who had obliged his wife to give him this name, and was thus able to take advantage of it: he was a brother of marshal d'Albret. His adventure is like that of Bussy d'Amboise, favourite of the duke d'Alençon, brother of Charles IX., who was stabbed by Montsoreau, who had obliged his wife to appoint a similar meeting. It will be seen, in one of the following letters, that M. de Lameth was prosecuted for this murder, and gained his cause.

Madame de Lameth was a woman of great wit, whose letters were as much in request as those of madame de Sévigné and madame de Coulanges. Bussy's supplement has supplied these names, which were only in initials.

LETTER * DXLVIII.

TO THE SAME.

Livri, August 23, 1678.

WHERE is your son, my dear cousin? mine, I think, will never die, since he has not been killed already at Mons. Peace being made and signed on the 9th August, the prince of Orange wished to give himself the pleasure of this tournament. You know there was no less blood shed than at Senef. The day after the battle, he sent to apologise to M. de Luxembourg, and informed him that if he had sent him word peace was signed, he would have taken care not to have come to an engagement. This is like the duellist in the play, who asks pardon for every thrust he makes into the body of his antagonist.

The principal officers of the contending parties therefore assumed in their conference an air of peace, and ~~agreed to send word to M. de Luxembourg~~ My son was present at this romantic interview. The marquis de Grana asked M. de Luxembourg, what squadron it was which had sustained for two successive hours the fire of nine of his cannon, which played incessantly, to make themselves masters of the battery my son defended. M. de Luxembourg told him, it was the dauphin's gendarmes, and that M. de Sévigné, whom he pointed out to him, was at their head. You may conceive the compliments that were made him, and how much, on such an occasion, he was repaid for his patience. This, it is true, was very great; he had forty of his gendarmes killed behind him. I cannot understand how any one can escape in these hot and continued firings, in which he is confined to one spot, and which makes death appear a

thousand times more horrible than when he is engaged in action, and employed in fighting and defending himself.

This is my poor son's adventure, and this is how he was served on the very day peace was made. In this way it might be said of him, with greater justice than of Dangeau: "If peace lasts for ten years, he will be marshal of France."

LETTER * DXLIX.

FROM M. DE CORBINELLI TO THE COUNT DE BUSSY.

Livri, September 10, 1678.

I HAVE read your reflections, sir, upon the Princess of Clèves. I found them excellent, and full of good sense, and liked them so much the better, as they clashed with the opinion of every person of discernment in this part of the world.

I have thought of a trip into Burgundy, merely from a desire to pay you a visit at Chaseu, for it is there I fancy you pass your winters, and I should like much to have a little conversation with you about the affairs of this country. Good God, what fine things we should say of the king! I know how fond you are of his praise, and the manner in which you would transmit his noble deeds to posterity. Ah, how many fragments we should make, if the work were intrusted to us!

FROM MADAME DE GRIGNAN.

I SHOULD like to join the chorus. It seems as if my voice would harmonise well with yours. But after having praised the monarch, should we say nothing of his captains? You have heard of battles gained in war, but

M. de Luxembourg does more, he gains them in peace*. You are well acquainted with history, but you never met with similar events. Would to God you would take the pains to write an account of them ! Your style is admirably calculated for history. I have seen persons who are delighted with some of your works. If ever I return to Bussy, I shall ask you to show them to me as a proof of your friendship. Can you guess, sir, who it is that thus engages your friendship ? You can easily understand that she must have some portion of that sentiment for you : she would otherwise be very unjust : but I do not pursue this theme, for I love and esteem you. I embrace madame de Coligny with all my heart ; she is amiable and estimable.

FROM MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Is it necessary to tell you, that it was the beautiful Madelonne, who took our pen to write this to you ? We are still here with our dear friend. In reality, we very often think of you, and, knowing and loving you as we do, we can never forget your wit. I recommend you and madame de Coligny to each other. Converse often together, that you may not forget your language : it is this which has preserved you hitherto from the mould, which too often grows in the country : as long as you are together, you will be exempt from it.

M. de Lameth has gained his cause. He is permitted to prove himself a cuckold ; but his wife pretends to justify herself, and shows as clearly as the day that he

* The prince of Orange, after the signature of peace, attacked marshal de Luxembourg, who, though taken by surprise, resisted with valour. The affair was bloody. The prince wished, they say, to break the treaty. He excused himself by saying, that the news had not reached him officially. "It was," said Bussy, "a species of assassination which well deserved that he should be informed of it."

is impotent: M. de Montespan appeared at court to support M. d'Albret. M. de Courcelles was also expected there, but he did not come, because he died that day of a complaint of which his wife is recovered.

LETTER * DL.

FROM MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO THE COUNT DE BUSSY.

Paris, October 12, 1678.

I HAVE received two of your letters, my dear cousin. In one you tell me your mode of life, and how you amuse yourself. I think you are in very good company, and that you make an excellent use of every thing that can contribute to render society delightful; if we were living under a less equitable reign, your agreeable exile might be changed, as it happened once to a Roman. It was discovered that he was living in the happiest manner possible, in an island where he was exiled; and he was recalled to Rome, and condemned to live with his wife. I am glad that you and madame de Coligny promise to love me. I am delighted to please and be esteemed by you both. My daughter, M. de Corbinelli, and I, talked of you a great deal the other day, and particularly of madame de Coligny; indeed she was deservedly celebrated; and what we most admired in her, was the tenderness of her attachment to you, and the pleasure she takes in amusing your exile: that proceeds from a truly heroic soul. Mademoiselle de Scudery says, the true proportion of merit must be taken by the measure of the capacity to love. Judge thereby of your daughter's value. They also should be praised who are worthy of being loved: This regards you, my dear cousin.

I can besides answer for your incorruptibility, as long as you are together.

M. de Luxembourg's army is not yet dispersed; the attendants talk of the siege of Trèves or Juliers. I shall be in despair if I am obliged to turn my thoughts again to war. I should be very glad that neither my son nor my property were exposed to such glorious sufferings. It is melancholy to advance into the regions of misery, which is unavoidable with persons of your profession.

You know, I believe, that madame de Meckelbourg, in her way to Germany, passed through her brother's* army. She was there three days, like Armida, in the midst of military honours, which are not quietly bestowed. I cannot imagine how she could have thought of me at such a time. She did more: she wrote me a very civil letter, which surprised me, as I have no correspondence with her. She might make ten campaigns and take ten journeys into Germany without thinking of me, and I should not consider I had any right to complain. I wrote her word, that I had read of many princesses being at the army, and making themselves admired and adored by all the princes, who were so many lovers, but that I had never heard of one who, in the midst of this triumph, thought of writing to an old friend, who had not even the quality of being in the confidence of her highness.

M. de Brandebourg and the Danes have so completely driven the Swedes out of Germany, that the elector has now nothing to do but to come and join our enemies. It is feared this will retard peace with the Germans.

"The court is at St. Cloud; the king wishes to go to Versailles: but God, it seems, wills otherwise, by the impossibility of getting the buildings ready to receive

* Marshal de Luxembourg.

him, and by the great mortality that prevails among the workmen, of whom there are every night waggons full of the dead carried out as from the Hotel-Dieu. This melancholy step is concealed as much as possible, in order not to alarm other workmen, and decry the air of this *unworthy favourite*. You are acquainted with this witticism upon Versailles†.”

We have left Livri sooner than we wished, on account of a fever, which seized one of the mesdemoiselles de Grignan very violently. We accustomed ourselves to the good place insensibly, and almost wept when we quitted our forest. The good Corbinelli keeps his room with a cold. My daughter's health, which gave us some hope of re-establishment, is become worse, that is, is changed to extreme delicacy, but it does not prevent her from loving and honouring you.

LETTER * DLI.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, November 14, 1678.

I wish to write in my prayer-book what M. de Cominès says of the cross purposes of human life. It is pleasant to see that, even in his time, tribulation and misery were the lot of mankind. His style gives peculiar grace to the solidity of his argument. For my part, I am determined to be more than ever convinced of the impossibility of being happy in this world, since God keeps *loyally* to what he has promised‡.

† This fragment within inverted commas, which we take from the supplement of Bussy's works, a curious and scarce book, had been omitted in the collection of letters.

‡ This is the passage from Cominès quoted by Bussy:

“No creature is exempt from suffering. All eat their bread in pain

I have always a thousand remembrances to make you on the part of madame de Grignan.

FROM MADAME DE GRIGNAN.

AND why cannot I make them for myself, without giving the trouble to another? It is certain, sir, that I can never resist the temptation of adding a word to you, in my mother's letters. If you ask what interpretation I give to the word temptation; it is, that I am fearful on your account of tiring; for with regard to myself, I cannot but be benefited in often reminding you of me, and in drawing upon myself a thousand kindnesses, which you express in a truly novel style. Perhaps even your mistresses never had the pleasure of hearing you wish to go to hell with them; and this wish is a thousand times more obliging, than to wish simply to accompany them, without caring whither. If madame de Coligny had been so kind as to wish to spend her eternity with me, without any restriction, I think we should have been very good companions every where; but prudence has withheld her. I see plainly she thinks I am entangled in the sect of Descartes, to whom you attribute the honour of my ruin. I will not however abjure it yet: there are revolutions in opinions, as well as in fashions, and I hope his will one day triumph, and crown my perseverance. You do wrong, sir, to spend your winters in Burgundy, when I spend mine here; we ought to understand one another better: it is a pleasure that ought not to be neglected. I speak for myself, for it is very possible that, you having madame de Coligny, and madame de Coligny you, you wish for nothing more. I think you both in very good company, and I salute you both very humbly.

and sorrow. Our Lord promised it when he made man, and has loyally kept his word to all people."

FROM MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ:

It would have been a great pity to have prevented her from speaking for herself. Our dear Corbinelli assures you of his old affection; and I assure you, my dear cousin, and my dear niece, that I love and esteem you highly. Send me word where you shall pass the winter.

LETTER * DLII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, December 18, 1678.

O BLESSED people! O demi gods! if you are superior to the rage of basset; if you have the mastery over yourselves; if you take time as it is sent by God; if you consider your exile as a part of the order of Providence; if you do not look back upon the past, to repent of what happened thirty years ago; if you are above ambition and avarice: in short, O happy people! O demi gods! if you are as I have always seen you, and if you spend your winter peaceably at Autun, with the delightful society you point out to me. Our friend Corbinelli will write to you in my letter. Cardinal de Retz, the most generous and noble of mankind, has wished to give him a proof of his friendship and esteem. He acknowledges him as his kinsman, but much more as an amiable and unfortunate man. He has taken pleasure in removing him from the situation in which M. de Vardes left him, after so many sufferings upon his account, and so many important services as he had rendered him; and in short, he gave him, the day before yesterday, two hundred pistoles for a year's annuity which he means to settle on him. I know not when

I have experienced so lively a joy. His is much less ; his philosophy is ~~unshaken~~ ; and as I know you love him, I am certain you will be as glad as I am.

To return to basset, which exceeds all description. A hundred thousand pistoles are often lost at it in an evening. I find that when all the ready money is gone, the rest is ideal, and that they play like children to win it back again*. The king appears to be displeased at this excess. You must have heard that peace with Spain is ratified, and I suppose Germany will soon follow.

The poor lovely countess is so pierced with the cold, that she has desired me to apologise for her, and to assure you of her sincere regard, not omitting madame de Coligny. Her lungs, her ink, her pen, her ideas, all are frozen.

FROM M. DE CORBINELLI.

I HAVE seen a word from you, sir, which has given me great pleasure. If I were to listen to my enthusiasm, I should write you a long letter of thanks ; that is, the ardour of my gratitude would lead me into ingratitude, for this is the name which might be given to a long letter from me. Good heavens! how well I can conceive the pleasure it would be to make a trip with you and madame de Coligny, and to chat with you without reserve round a noble fire at Chateau! I shall go there some day : this is a satisfaction I constantly promise myself ; for you know it is ourselves we seek to gratify in every thing, and that there exists but one passion, which is self-love. I intend to examine a thousand

* Madame de Montespan lost four millions at one sitting. But she obliged the bankers to play, till she had won all back again. It ended in their being duped of all their ready money, for the game of basset was suddenly prohibited.

things, and to inspire you with a feeling of contempt for the public approbation, which is bestowed on many who do not deserve it. I like to examine even the things that please me, in order to discover whether I deceive myself. I request that we may do the same together. We will talk, like honest men, of the court, war, politics, virtues, passions, and vices.

I have lately taken it into my head to criticise many of M. de la Rochefoucault's maxims. I am now examining this :

“ Gracefulness is to the body, what good sense is to the mind.”

I demand at your tribunal, whether it is easy to understand this, and what affinity or proportion there is between gracefulness and good sense.

I think words are made use of in conversation, which, if examined, will commonly be found equivocal, and if we sift them, not to convey the meaning they appear to every body to bear. For instance : I request madame de Coligny to define gracefulness to me, and to point out the difference between it and elegance ; to tell me also the distinction between good sense and judgement ; reason and good sense ; genius and talent ; whim, caprice, and oddity ; ingenuousness and artlessness ; complaisance, politeness, and civility ; playful, pleasant, and droll. Do not waste your time in telling me these are mostly synonymes ; this is the language of the indolent or the ignorant : I am for defining every thing, good or bad, it matters not. Pray follow my example.

LETTER * DLIII.

FROM THE COUNT DE BUSSY TO M. DE CORBINELLI.

YOUR letter, sir, has made the same impression upon me that your letters always do: it is the conversation of a gentleman and a man of wit, but I should wish to converse with you more frequently than by letter. If you were here we should pass our lives more pleasantly than at Paris, and should reason more soberly. My daughter de Coligny and I are not of your opinion in your criticism upon the maxim, that gracefulness is to the body, what good sense is to the mind. We think M. de la Rochefoucault means, that the body, without gracefulness, is as disagreeable, as the mind without good sense; and we hold it to be true. We think also that there is a difference between gracefulness and elegance; that gracefulness is natural, and elegance acquired; that gracefulness is pretty, and elegance beautiful; that gracefulness gains love, and elegance esteem.

M. d'Autun, to whom I have shown your letter, has thought us thus far right, except that he has found fault with elegance gaining respect. My daughter thought it better to say esteem, and we have all subscribed to it. For my part, I had considered good sense and judgement as the same, but madame de Coligny contends that good sense relates to the thoughts and expressions, and judgement to the conduct. M. d'Autun agreed with her, and I was brought into their opinion.

We all think that good sense, reason, and good understanding, are the same thing; that genius is general, and talent particular; that oddity is continual, and caprice by intervals; that it is a good quality to be ingenuous, or at least indifferent, and that it is a defect to

be artless ; that it requires more wit to be polite than complaisant ; that complaisance has more solidity and extent than civility, which is only the appearance of it.

Madame de Coligny and I would fain have believed that drollery and playfulness or pleasantry were the same ; but M. d'Autun has converted us, by saying that pleasantry often amused us as much upon serious as comic subjects, but that drollery made us laugh only at nonsense and folly. He agreed however, that both these qualities might sometimes become tiresome, but that the agreeable must always be pleasing. It is true, the difference is so trifling, that it is scarcely worth while to seek for it.

Adieu, sir ; my daughter and I strive which shall love you best.

LETTER * DLIV.

FROM MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO THE COUNT DE BUSSY.

Paris, February 27, 1679.

You have spent the winter at Autun in excellent society. If I forgot in my first letter to mention the bishop, I beg that I may repair my fault in this, and that he will be persuaded by you, that I honour him perfectly, and that, believing him to rank highest among what is called good society here, I leave him to judge what I think of him in the country, and how happy I consider you in having passed some months with him. We have had insufferable snow and ice here : the streets were like roads broken into deep ruts. Within these few days we have begun to see the pavement, which has given us as much pleasure as the olive-branch which showed that the earth was again visible. I think, however, you ought not to be in too much haste to return to your

beautiful neighbourhood of Chaseu: it is much too soon; the month of April introduces the spring.

My daughter is still languid; her ill state of health is the greatest sorrow of my life. We are now employed in hearing fine sermons. Father Bourdaloue thunders at St. Jaques de la Boucherie. He ought to preach in a more accessible place; the throng and the carriages create so much confusion, that the communication with that part of the town is quite interrupted.

Bishoprics and abbeys are distributing without number. A young abbé de la Broue, who has preached only once before the king, is to have the bishopric of Mirepoix; M. de Tulle (Mascaron) that of Agen; father Saillan, of the Oratory, is nominated for Tréguier, the abbé de Bourlement for Frejus, the abbé de Noailles for Cahors. M. de Marsan and the chevalier de Tilladet are pensioners. The abbé de la Fayette, and a brother of Marsillac, have abbeys. In short, some are content, and others not. There is nothing new in this: it is the world.

Have you heard of the mitigation that has taken place in the confinement of M. de Lauzun and M. Fouquet? The permission they have obtained to see all those who are in the citadel, to see each other, and to eat and converse together, is perhaps one of the most sensible pleasures they will ever receive.

I was in a place the other day where things were cut out of a whole piece*. They opened prisons, recalled exiles, restored many things to their proper places, and removed many which had been substituted for them. You were not forgotten in this change, and were spoken of very handsomely. This is all the information a letter can give you.

* *Tailler en plein drap*: to talk largely.

LETTER * DLV.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, May 29, 1679.

WHAT do we say when we are to blame? For my part, I have not a syllable to say for myself; the words stick in my throat: in short, I did not write to you though I wished it every day, and though I love you more than you love me: what folly it is to undervalue our wares so much! For friendship is a very good commodity, and I have enough to adorn myself with, when I wish to make my profit of my sentiments. We have been into the country for ten days, enjoying the finest weather imaginable; my daughter is tolerably well there: I could wish her to stay with me all the summer; I think her health would wish it too, but her reason is austere, and makes her prefer her duty to her life. We detained her last year, and because she fancies herself better than you, I fear she will escape us now. I saw the good father Rapin the other day; I love him, he appears to me a good man and a good friar: he has written an essay upon history and style which has pleased me very much. Father Bouhours was with him; wit seems to come from him on all sides. I was very glad to see them both. We commemorated you as a person of whom absence ought not to make us unmindful. All the courtiers we knew, appeared to us unworthy to be compared with you, and we placed your understanding in the rank it merits. There is nothing I talk of with so much pleasure.

Have you read the life of the great Theodosius, by the abbé Fléchier? I think it excellent.

You know all the news, my dear cousin; what shall

I tell you? How can we reason upon what has happened, any more than we can upon the difficulties of Brandebourg, who is making many of his officers take a trip into Germany †?

But what say you of our poor Corbinelli? Fate has obliged him to support a law-suit for one of his relations out of pure generosity. His philosophy is quite deranged by it. He is in continual agitation. He injures his health and his spirits by it. In short, it is a misfortune for him, at which all his friends are grieved.

LETTER * DLVI.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, June 27, 1679.

I HAVE not a single word to say upon the first subject of your letter, except that Livri is my favourite place for writing. Both my mind and my body are there at rest, and when I have an answer to make, I defer it to my next journey. But this is not right, and it occasions delays, of which I will correct myself. I always say, that if I could live to the age of two hundred years,

† The peace of the north had been concerted between France and Holland. But the parties interested were not satisfied, particularly the duke de Brandebourg, who had driven the Swedes from the continent, and wished to preserve all his conquests. It was necessary that marshal de Crequi should beat him in Westphalia, which became too easy a victory to be glorious.

This was not the only news of the court. Madame de Montespan was no longer the king's mistress. The beautiful Fontanges had openly displaced her. The Easter devotions were the epoch of these changes. The confessor Lachaise found good reasons why this amour should be preferred to the other: this gave him the name of *la chaise de commodité* (the easy chair). The fury of madame de Montespan, and the advantage madame de Maintenon derived from this circumstance, are well known.

I should become the best creature in the world. I correct myself easily; and the more readily, the older I grow. I know a thousand things are pardoned in the charms and bloom of youth, which are not overlooked when that delightful season is past. We are examined more closely; nothing is excused; the favourable disposition to take every thing in good part is lost; in short, we are no longer permitted to be in the wrong; and in this idea, self-love makes us resort to whatever can support us under this cruel decline, which gains ground daily, in spite of ourselves.

These are the reflections which make me think that at my age we ought to neglect ourselves less than in the prime of youth. But life is too short; and death seizes us while we are still full of our miseries and our good intentions.

I very much admire your letter to the king; I think it excellent in point of style, noble, free, and courteous, which pleases me. I believe no one but yourself would ever have advised his sovereign to suffer the least of all his servants to remain in exile, in order to give full credit to the good that might be said of him, and to take away every suspicion of flattery in his history.

What my dear niece has written to me appears so just and excellent, that I will abate nothing of it: it is impossible for her not to love me, by the way in which she expresses her regard.

TO MADAME DE COLIGNY.

I THANK you, my dear niece; and I wish, instead of a written answer, you could have heard what I said of you the other day; I painted you to the life, and admirably too. Few persons can boast of the merit you possess.

Our poor friend is swallowed up in his law-suit. He wishes to conduct it according to the rules of reason and good sense, and when he sees, at every moment, that chicanery removes him from them, he is in despair. He would wish his rhetoric to persuade, as in justice it ought to do; but it is frequently thrown away. The zeal he displays for his cousin is not love, but generosity; but the fatigue he undergoes in this unfortunate affair is death to him. I am quite afflicted at it, for I see little of him, and I fear I shall see still less.

My daughter will not go till September. She is better, and sends a thousand remembrances to you, madam, and to you, sir. If you knew her better, you would love her still more.

LETTER *DLVII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, July 20, 1679.

I HAVE seen and conversed with the bishop of Autun, and I do not wonder at the attachment of his friends to him. He has told me that he once passed Langeron, and that he would not even take off his boots there. He was there for six weeks. The place is well calculated to promote the gaiety, charms, and readiness, of his wit. I think I should be still more convinced of this, if I were better acquainted with him. We talked very much of you in the same way. I mentioned the letter you had written to the king: he told me he had seen it, and that he thought it a very good one. I think you very fortunate in having him. This happiness is reciprocal, and you are both very good company. He will tell you the news, and the preparations that are making for the marriage of the king of Spain, and that

the priace and princess of Harcourt are chosen to conduct the queen of Spain * to her husband, and of the office the king has given to M. de Marsillac without injury to the former (the prince of Harcourt). He will inform you that M. de Feuillade, a courtier surpassing all former courtiers, has procured a block of marble, which occupied the whole length of the street St. Honoré, and that the soldiers who brought it would not give way to the carriage of the prince, though he himself was in it, and that there was a skirmish between the soldiers and the footmen: the mob interfered, the marble was drawn aside, and the prince passed. The bishop will also tell you that this marble is at M. de Feuillade's, who is raising Phidias or Praxiteles from the dead, to carve the figure of the king on horseback, and that this statue will cost him more than thirty thousand crowns.

It seems to me that this letter is not unlike the chapters of *Amadis*: *And how Tonquin d'Armorique was no other than René de Guingo. And how, having found his dear, he was at a loss what to say to her.*

I am such a libertine when I write, that the first turn I take governs my whole letter. It were to be wished that my poor pen, galloping as it does, would gallop at least on a good footing. You would be less annoyed by it, sir, and you too, madam, for I always address you both, and embrace you both with all my heart. My

* Mademoiselle, the daughter of Monsieur, brother of Lewis XIV., was married to Charles II. king of Spain. This was one of the conditions of peace, to which the young princess barely assented. She had wished to marry the dauphin. The king said to her: "I make you queen of Spain; what more could I do for my own daughter?" "Ah," replied she, "you might do more for your niece!" She died ten years afterwards. We shall have occasion to speak of her death, which excited so many suspicions.

daughter desires me to add a thousand remembrances for her. She is better; but, as there is no pure bliss in the world, she is thinking of returning to Provence, and I can only purchase the pleasure of seeing her at the price of her ill health. I must choose between these two evils, and fix upon absence, bitter and hard as it is to bear. You are happy in being exempt from the pang of separations. The departure of my son, who is going to encamp on the plains of Ouailles, is not so grievous as in former years; but it costs nearly as much; gold and silver, fine horses, and splendid accoutrements, being the true representation of the troops of the Persian kings. Send the Fables of La Fontaine as soon as possible: they are divine. At first we think we prefer some to others; but on reading them again, we find them all equally good. They are related and written in a style of excellence to which we are little accustomed. Tell me your opinion of them, and which struck you first.

Our friend Corbinelli is hoping to settle his cousin's business happily. If you are at Chaseu, give my compliments to M. and madame de Toulangeon. I like this little woman: do you not think her still pretty?

LETTER *DLVIII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, August 20, 1679.

I KNOW not, my dear cousin, why you do not indulge yourself in the pleasure of good company, which is so rare a thing to meet with in the country, by associating with M. de ****†. His wife has a great share of

† There is every reason to believe that M. de Guitaut is the person alluded to. The coldness between him and Bussy took its date from the time of the civil wars. Guitaut had been preferred to Bussy by the great Condé.

wit; my niece would be very much pleased with her. You have no pique against each other; when you return home, it is very natural to call upon him, and then you will see how you agree together. I am sure it will be well, and that if he met you he would embarrass you by his attentions, and by the manner in which he would testify his desire to become your servant and friend. Good heavens! have we so much society in the country as to be obliged to deprive ourselves of those with whom we might speak our own language, and who would understand us so well? It seems to me as if you and my niece could not avoid loving those who would know your worth. The fancy has taken me to write this to you; a trifle is sometimes able to break the ice: I have engaged to make you friends: weak as I am, this seems to be within my strength to accomplish. Tell me what you think of it. I could wish that, without repeating old grievances, this were conducted with the courtesy and grace you so well know how to employ, when you please. If I succeed, I am sure you will both thank me. These are my thoughts: make what use of them you think fit.

LETTER * DLIX.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, August 25, 1679.

PITY me, my dear cousin, in the loss I have sustained in cardinal de Retz. You know how deserving he was of the love and esteem of all who were acquainted with him. I was his friend for thirty years, and I never received but the tenderest proofs of his friendship. It was equally honourable and delightful to me. He was more easy of access than any man in the world. A week's

fever has deprived me of this illustrious friend. I am grieved to the heart.

I have heard that a thunderbolt has fallen in your neighbourhood†. Inform me by what miracle you have escaped. Think as you go along of the ill fortune of Corbinelli. Cardinal de Retz loved him dearly: he had begun to allow him an annuity of two thousand francs: his unlucky planet has, I think, killed this great man.

Our good abbé de Coulanges has been near death. The English physician's remedy has restored him. God did not see fit for cardinal de Retz to make use of it, though he requested it incessantly. The hour of his death was appointed, and was not to be altered.

My daughter sends her compliments to you both. I am afraid she is on wing. Adieu, my two dears.

LETTER * DLX.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, August 29, 1679.

THE account of my niece's law-suit has given me pleasure, my dear cousin; and in your repartee to the advocate of Riom, I thought your wit well placed. I take a serious part in every thing that interests my dear niece, and her dear father. Since the count de Dalet has appealed against de Riom's sentence, I hope you will not remain alone in your chateaux, and that you will ask the king's leave to come to Paris, which, if we

† Bussy relates the event thus: "It is nearly a fortnight ago that a thunderbolt fell at the distance of half a league from hence. Out of six persons who were under a walnut-tree, three were killed, and the other three injured in a way to make one of them fit for the keeper of a scraglio, and to burn his wife in the same manner. These are singular effects produced by thunder. I, who merit other punishments than the fire of heaven, have no fear of it."

may judge by appearances, he will not refuse you. I had no fears for you, my dear cousin, when I heard of the thunder in your neighbourhood. You have never deserved the fire of heaven; other houses than yours might tremble, but repentance is a sort of glass which often defends the plant from the storm.

LETTER DLXI.

MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO THE COUNTESS DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Friday evening, Sept. 15, 1679.

I AM very uneasy at not hearing from you as I expected. I find a thousand objects in my way, which both surprise and affect me. Yesterday I was at mademoiselle de Meri's; and, to tell you the truth, I am but just come from thence. She has no fever, but is so exhausted with her usual complaints, and her vapours, and so overwhelmed and mortified at your departure, that it grieves me to see her: no one dares talk to her of any thing; every thing is a burthen to her, and throws her into great agitation. She desired I would inform you of her situation and lowness of spirits. Good heavens, how I long to hear of you after the fatigues of the boat! for the boat is always uppermost with me: in the boat I always think I see you, and scarcely ever at your inn. I suppose, after this slow and gentle motion, you will wish for rough roads and jolting, as you wished for a dunghill after the orange-flowers. In short, my child, I long to hear of you, as well as of the rest of your party, whom I embrace heartily and cordially. It seems to me as if the care and attention of all were fixed on you alone: and, besides being a personage of rank, you are so delicate, that it would be almost a crime to think of any thing else. I have seen the marchioness

d'Huzelles, who will take care to receive you at Chalons with proper distinction; I address this letter to you there.

And now we have once more resumed our correspondence; I can, however, assert, that I fully estimated the happiness I enjoyed in your society; and that of all the time I spent with you, there is not so much as a single moment of which I repent; for did I not make the most of it? At length this precious time is fled: my life passes too quickly; I was scarcely sensible of it; and though I complained of it daily, it flew with the same rapidity. To your absence I owe the pleasure of feeling the real duration and length of my life. We have no news: "he who sees little, has little to communicate." The king of England is very ill. The queen of Spain does nothing but weep; so much for the calendar of this present month. I could wish to chat with you some time longer; but it grows late, and I must let you rest, so I wish you a good night. Is it possible that I should yet be ignorant of what may have happened to the boat, which to my great regret I saw gradually disappearing from my view? This suspense is almost equally painful. But if you have not written before, I have at least the consolation of knowing that it is not your fault, and that I shall be made happy by the receipt of your letter to-morrow. This is the point on which every thing now depends with me, instead of being with you every day and every night.

LETTER DLXII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Monday, September 18, 1679.

I EXPECTED your letter with the utmost impatience, as I was anxious to be informed of your situation: but I have not been able to read without tears what you say of your reflections and repentance on my account. O, my child! what do you mean by the words penitence and pardon? I assure you I am blind to every thing but your excellences; and such is the affection of my heart towards you, that, notwithstanding my extreme sensibility with regard to you, a single word, a caress, an embrace, a kind or endearing expression, disarms me, and cures me in an instant, as it were, by enchantment: I have told you this more than once, I tell you so again, and it is true. I am convinced that you will not abuse my confidence, but it is certain, that in some way or other you are a continual source of agitation to my mind. Would to God, my child, I could see you once more at the hotel de Carnavalet, not for a week, nor to do penance there, but that I might again press you to my heart, and prove to you, beyond all possibility of doubt, that I cannot be happy except in your society, and that the sorrows which proceed from my affection for you, are infinitely more pleasing to me than the false peace of a tedious absence. If your heart were more open, you would not be so unjust. Speak, explain yourself. Do not, as marshal de Grammont said, suffer people to exist, or to laugh, whose throats are cut, though they do not feel it. There is no other means of communicating our ideas but by words, and

sincerity is a valuable blessing; time will, perhaps, make you sensible of this truth.

You give an excellent description of your manner of living in the boat; you slept in your own bed, though I much doubt whether you slept so well as those who lay on straw. I congratulate the young marquis on his good fortune, in having that silly little boy with him; his example will be of more service to him than all the lessons in the world: I dare say he will not seek to imitate such wicked conduct. I have no news of your brother; pray, what think you of his neglect? I paid a visit to *maidemoiselle de Meri* yesterday, and found her tolerably calm. It is still, however, difficult to converse with her; she often flies out on the slightest occasions, even when we imagine we have hit her humour to the greatest nicety; but she is certainly much better: I shall call on her in my way from Livri, where I am now going with the good abbé and Corbinelli. I must tell you another truth, which is, that I am not yet sufficiently accustomed to the sight of you, and to the extreme joy I always found in your society, not to feel more sensibly than any other person the pain of being separated from you. I am going to search for you once more at Livri, which you have rendered the most disagreeable place in the world to me. Yesterday I saw madame de Lavardin and M. de la Rochefoucault; whose grandson is so ill as to give him great uneasiness. M. de Toulonjeon* died lately at Bearn; the count de Grammont has obtained his lieutenancy of the king, on condition of resigning it, after a certain time, to M. de Feuquiere's second son, in consideration of

* Henry de Grammont, count de Toulonjeon, brother of Philibert count de Grammont.

a hundred thousand livres. The queen of Spain * is always in tears, and throws herself at the feet of every body. I cannot conceive how the proud Spaniards will relish this. The other day she detained the king beyond his hour of going to mass; the king said to her, "It would be a strange thing, madam, if her catholic majesty should prevent his most christian majesty from going to mass." It is thought none of them would be sorry to be rid of this catholic personage. I swear to you, my dear child, I have not the courage to reflect on your absence in the aggregate; and that, to lessen this thought, and above all, to repair the little injustices you have done me, I require you never to forget my feelings towards you, and to believe in them more firmly than ever; I shall never doubt the kindness and affection of your heart towards me. Madame de la Fayette embraces you, and begs you to continue the friendship you have renewed with her.

LETTER DLXIII.

TO THE SAME.

Livri, Wednesday Sept. 20, 1679.

It is not strange to you to find yourself in that boat without me, nor do you expect to see me at Auxerre, Chalons, Lyons, nor even at Grignan. But I am so struck with the idea of having seen you here, that I cannot help thinking I shall meet you every moment. I want also to see the mesdemoiselles de Grignan and the little marquis: in short, I am so mortified at finding myself here alone, that I no longer, as usual, wish to stop

* Marie-Louise, eldest daughter of Monsieur, and of Henrietta of England, was married at Fontainebleau, on the 31st of August preceding, to the prince of Conti, as proxy for the king of Spain (Charles II.).

the progress of time : no, I would have it fly more rapidly than it does, to hasten the happy moment when I shall see you again, and to wear away a few of the disagreeable impressions which are but too strongly engraved on my heart. Is it then the being for ever occupied with these thoughts, that makes you say we are never absent from each other ? I own that, in this respect I agree with you ; but, what name do you give to the feelings, when the presence of the beloved object is so dear to us ? You will allow, the contrary must be bitter indeed. I have this moment heard that La Trousse is set out for Ypres. His wife could not bid him adieu ; her case is really deplorable : I pity her, because affection is the occasion of her sufferings : there is reason to fear the cause of her affliction will not be speedily removed. The queen of Spain became a fountain to-day. I can easily enter into the griefs of separation. I follow you step by step : you are at Lyons, you have seen Guitaut. I am extremely impatient to hear from you.

Wednesday, six in the evening.

I have just received your journal, my beloved child, and, at length, your letter from Auxerre. This letter was essential to me. I now see you out of that wretched boat, where you have enjoyed only the shadow of repose ; for, after all, it is an uncomfortable mode of conveyance. Forbear to tell me that I have no reason to regret you ; how can you suppose that I have not the greatest reason in the world ? I know not what may have entered your brain ; but, for my own part, I remember nothing but your affection, your care, your kindness, and your caresses : these it is I have lost, these it is I regret ; nothing can efface the remembrance of them, and nothing can console me for their loss. Be assured, my dearest child, that the affection you are

pleased to call your only wealth, can never fail you ; would to God you were equally certain of preserving every thing else that belongs to you ! I shall not repeat the subject of your journey, the particulars of which are dear to me : you are now at Grignan, so that I must now talk about your north-easterly winds ; pray tell me what reception they gave you, and how you are. I shall know the remainder of your journey and your visit to Guitaut, Chalons, and Lyons. Alas ! my dear child, I can think of nothing but you, and of what concerns you.

My dear count, you will reap great honour if you are so fortunate as to conduct this delicate constitution home, in safety ; and I shall be more obliged to you than for any service you could render me. Young ladies, I often think of you. I am always on the look-out for you : I expect to find one of you in the garden, and the other in the swing : I call, but I receive no answer ; you both share in my distress. My dear little marquis, pray do not forget your good mamma.

LETTER DLXIV.

TO THE SAME.

Livri, Wednesday, September 22, 1679.

I THINK of you incessantly ; and as I have few occupations, I have the more room for reflection. I am here alone : Corbinelli is at Paris ; my mornings are all spent in solitude. It really seems to me, my child, as if I could not live without you. I find I have made so trifling a progress in this excursion, and it is so great a mortification to be without you, that I draw this inference : there is no good like the present, and it is dangerous to accustom ourselves to the company of one so singularly excellent : the separation is past comprehen-

sion; I feel it, my beloved child, in all its horrors, while you have no leisure to know what it means. I am already too sensibly affected with the desire of seeing you again, and with the thoughts of a year's absence; the bare prospect of which is insupportable. I am every morning in the garden you so well know, and am seeking for you every where; there is not a walk in it where I have beheld you, that does not make me ill. You see what an impression the smallest trifles which have any connexion with you, make on my poor brain. But I should not have mentioned this weakness, which I am sure you will laugh at, if I had had any thing else to talk of: I have nothing to reply to, and I know no news. You are to-day at Lyons, and will be at Grignan when you receive this. I expect the account of your journey after leaving Auxerre. I dislike getting up in the night as much as the mesdemoiselles de Grignan, and to what purpose all this stir, since you were not to set out till three in the morning? I should have thought you might have had your sleep out; but I find there is no such thing as a sound nap in that vehicle. I was going to say a great deal more on this subject, but it is just come into my head, that you will receive this letter at Grignan, and will be quite at a loss to know what I mean by the boat. I shall therefore change the subject.

Mademoiselle de Meri informs me she is just as I left her: she begs me to tell you so, that you may not be offended if her head should prevent her writing to you. Madame de Coulanges came late last evening with her sister; she has quitted Paris at last; her asthma has not left her. She tells me that M. de la Rocheguyon* lies dangerously ill in the small-pox. Du Chene has called

* Grandson of M. de Rochefoucault.

a consultation of all the physicians in the kingdom ; his fever is increased, and the pustules have dried up and turned green : all this is very alarming, and might afford us ample matter for reflection. A servant of madame de Coulanges's is just come from Paris, and assures me M. de la Rochegayon is better : my poor child, I humbly ask your pardon for my too hasty intelligence*. My son fills all his letters with you, and in telling me how much he shares in my grief at losing you ; he has great reason to do so, for it will be a long time before I shall be able to reconcile myself to this separation. Your letters are the only comfort of my life ; I read them again and again, and still go on. I entirely forget every thing that had the appearance of distance or indifference : it seems to me as if you could never have showed them ; but all the tender expressions you have ever used, whether by word or letter, appear to me as proceeding from the very bottom of your heart. Will this satisfy you, my beauty ? Is this affectionate enough for you ? And can you ever suffer yourself to doubt my sentiments, after my assuring you, in the most solemn manner, that this is my practice ?

Your brother appears to me to enjoy the utmost object of his wishes, that is, *good food, good lodging, and so forth*. He has been more than once sent as deputy from the nobility to M. de Chaulnes ; this is an attention paid to new-comers. Some other season we may

* Madame de Grignan, on being made acquainted with any ill news, used to make up her mind to it as if the worst had really happened ; but on being informed afterwards that the account she had received was without foundation, or that the person was recovering, who had been represented to her as upon the point of death, she would say, " I do not like people should change my ideas ; what must I do with all my past reflections ?" It is plain that this expression is a mere pleasantry between the mother and daughter. See Letter, November 21, 1670.

possibly hope to reap the fruits of the friendship of M. and madame de Chaulnes. The king has abated eight hundred thousand livres; so we shall get off for two millions two hundred thousand livres; a mere trifle. Adieu, my lovely and beloved child. If hearing that the emperor * and don John of Austria † are at the last gasp, can give you any pleasure, be assured there is no chance of their recovery. A queen of Spain, provided she had a head, might make a noble figure in the present conjuncture. It is said, she wept extremely on taking leave of the king; and that, on pronouncing an eternal adieu, they embraced each other again and again, with tears and sighs: what dreadful things are separations!

LETTER DLXV.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Wednesday, September 27, 1679.

I AM come here for a day or two with the good abbé, to settle a thousand trifling affairs. Alas, my child, what a dreadful thing is the remembrance of your departure! I cannot yet endure the reflection. I am told I ought to banish it from my mind, but in vain; it will always return. It is now a fortnight since I saw and embraced you; how shall I summon up courage to pass a month, two months, three months, without my dear child? It seems a kind of eternity to me. But let us talk of the fatigues of your journey. Why did they take the Burgundy road, which is so terrible a one? For expedition's

* The emperor Leopold Ignatius did not die till the 5th of May, 1705.

† Don John of Austria, natural son of Philip IV. king of Spain, died the 17th of September, 1679.

sake, no doubt; I can easily guess the reason. At length, you are at Grignan. I received all your dear letters from Chagni, Chalons, the boat, Lyons, at once. I was right in my calculation, that you would be at Lyons on Friday; I did not think of M. de Gordes, but I witnessed all the compliments that passed at Chalons, the fine weather that attended you thither; the battle between the sun and moon, which of the two should render you the greatest service; your apartment at madame de Rochebonne's, but I did not know it commanded so fine a prospect. I do not exactly know whether it was on Sunday or Monday you left Lyons, but am sure you must be at Grignan yesterday, that is, on Tuesday evening, for I reckon upon the civility of the Rhone. You are now, then, my beloved child, at home: how is your health? how do the north-easterly winds agree with you? You must take some time to settle your blood, which has been so terribly agitated by the journey; and, for this reason, repose is indispensably necessary to you. For myself, all I want is one single page of your writing, though I had a thousand times rather suffer myself, than endanger your health in the smallest degree. I am very uneasy about Montgobert; the air of Grignan is by no means proper for her, and I am charmed with her for forgetting herself so far as to accompany you thither. May I not say as much of you with respect to M. de Grignan? Your sole object in this last journey was his gratification, though he concealed for a long time the desire of his heart, under the mask of politeness. You pierced through the disguise, and to this have sacrificed your health, your repose, your life, the affection and happiness of your mother, and, in short, have perfectly fulfilled the precept of the gospel, which requires us to abandon all, and cleave to one's husband. Yours

deserves it; but this very circumstance ought to make him more than commonly careful of the health which you expose so freely and courageously for his sake. For my part, it is my whole study, though, to my great mortification, my study is to no purpose.

I have your brother's letters, which mention nothing but his *dove*. His quality as a new-comer in the province makes him of consequence, so that he is engaged in all the common affairs. M. de Coulanges has had a violent fever, but is, in a manner, recovered: his wife and La Bagnols are at Livri: I played them a shabby trick in leaving them on Monday; I return to-morrow morning, and they set out for Charenton, on account of M. de Bagnols' affairs at Paris, which makes him more desirous of going thither than to Livri. So you see, my dear child, I should be quite alone, if it were not for your image in my heart; but this is enough for me, and is a faithful companion whom I never abandon, and whom I prefer to all other guests. I saw madame de Lavardin at madame de la Fayette's, but learned no news of her. They both send you a thousand remembrances. Madame d'Osnabruck has been to visit Madame, who received her very courteously. The queen of Spain is on her journey, and constantly in tears. The people exclaimed, as she passed through the Rue St. Honoré, "Monsieur is too good, he will not suffer her to go in such distress." The king said to her, in the presence of the grand-duchess *, "Madam, I wish this adieu may be eternal; it would be the greatest misfortune that could happen to you, if you were ever to set foot again in France." The duchess de Rohan is delivered of a boy; this is the third duke in the family of

* It must be remembered, that the grand-duchess had very foolishly quitted Tuscany.

Chabot. They say marshal d'Humieres will return soon; the war is absolutely at an end. The chevalier, I believe, will come with him.

LETTER DLXVI.

TO THE SAME.

Livri, Friday morning, Sept. 25, 1679.

I WENT on Wednesday to sup with the marchioness d'Huxelles, and presented your compliments; it is impossible to have a greater esteem for any one than she has for you. She had come to visit me in the afternoon with mesdames De Lavardin, de Moussi, and De Belin, who all begged me to remember them affectionately to you. The good abbé and I returned here yesterday morning. Corbinelli is employed about his own affairs, so that I may still say I am alone: madame de Coulanges and La Bagnols set out for Charenton, and I saw them only for a moment. I shall therefore have only myself and your dear melancholy remembrance; and shall see how I can endure this society. M. Pascal says, that all our evils spring from not knowing how to stay at home. I hope I shall be able to keep within the boundaries of this garden and forest, so as to be out of harm's way. The weather is quite changed within these six days, though there are now and then some pleasant gleams. I was a considerable time in quest of you in the garden yesterday: I remembered you with a tenderness not to be conceived but by those who have experienced it.

The Englishman* has been to visit the good abbé, on account of the cold which gave us all so much uneasiness; he put something sweet into his bark, of such

* An English physician of the name of Talbot.

sovereign virtue, that the good abbé believes his cold is cured, and all our apprehensions are vanished. It is the very same medicine he gave Hautefeuille, which instantly cured him of the inflammation upon his lungs with which he was dying, and of his fever: it is, indeed, a wonderful medicine.

I begged madame de Lavardin to apologise to madame de Colbert, and to tell her your reasons when she saw her. I shall pay a visit to mesdames de Vence and de Tourette, and shall first send to inquire for them. Coulanges has been very ill at the assembly of the states; he is delighted at the care which has been taken of him, and at the deputations that have been sent to inquire after his health; his fever has been attended with no ill consequences. My son figures away nobly; he is employed in certain little commissions, which are commonly given to new-comers, by way of compliment. I have entreated madame de Marbeuf to marry him in Britany; he will never appear in so favourable a light as this year: he has been for ten years employed either in the court or in the army, and has acquired some reputation: the first year after the peace he bestows on his country; if he is not married now, he never will; this country is by no means favourable to his establishment. He must render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's: I have wandered a little from the text; but this is not to be regretted; it is easy to return to the matter in hand at any time, but it is not so easy to be a courtier and an honest man at pleasure. My son, according to custom, always speaks with great affection of his *dove*, and expresses much anxiety about the state of her health. He had been to take a turn at the Rocks with Coulanges, and both were charmed with its beauty: the part you have never seen is much superior to that you are acquainted with. Adieu, my

dearest! You ask me what I am doing; I am reading my old books, for I can meet with nothing new that tempts me; a little of Tasso, and now and then a little of the Moral Essays. When it is fair I shall walk again. I think of you continually and habitually. I regret your absence, though I cannot reproach myself with having ever been insensible to the charms of your society. I write to you, I read your letters again and again. I flatter myself with the hope of seeing you, and am forming schemes to accomplish it: I occupy and amuse myself with whatever has the most distant connexion with you, and by this means persuade myself I am not altogether idle.

LETTER DLXVII.

TO THE SAME.

Livri, Wednesday, October 4, 1679.

O THE delightful repose you enjoyed at Lyons! I foresaw it, my child, and I easily figured to myself the fatigue you must have undergone. Good heavens! how I am affected at whatever renders you uncomfortable! You were as much pestered with visits as if you had been at Paris. I pity you in having been obliged to leave poor Montgobert behind you ill. You had terrible weather when you embarked. How I shudder at the fury of the Rhone! Did you suffer from the tempest, or from the north-easterly winds, on your arrival? My child, our fears are never at an end when we love with so much affection as I love you. I am in hourly expectation of your letters; they are the only comfort of my life; but I tremble, lest your writing to me should inconvenience you; there is, in reality, very little of the Stoic philosopher in me: but it is my fate,

and I consent it should be so, since you will have it so. You answer me too amiably; I must be allowed to make use of this expression with regard to a passage in your letter, where you seem convinced of the truth of what I told you of the sincere return of my affection. But why do I say *return*, since my heart was never changed towards you? I discovered a coldness which I was at a loss to account for, as well as for your indifference to poor Corbinelli: I must not conceal from you that I was sensibly grieved at it; it was impossible not to see it: I was, however, so fully convinced of the injustice you did this excellent friend, and saw daily such evident marks of it as perfectly astonished me. Good heavens! what different treatment did he merit at your hands! with what prudence and discretion has he not borne this unmerited disgrace! I found him always the same; that is, employing all the application and address he was master of, to do you real service.

I did not expect you would have answered my long letter from Lyons; you neglected every thing else to read it; was not this very good? With regard to myself, I am at present in a sadness and a solitude which I prefer to the best company the world can afford; this is a charming place for one in my present humour: here are glades and alleys, whose sacred horror is interrupted only by the gallantries of our deer; and I am charmed with this retirement. Corbinelli is at Paris, the Coulanges at Charenton; I have informed them of all you wrote relative to them. It is true something has been said about Chantilli; but the idea was so soon given up, that there is nothing further to be said upon the subject. Now I am talking of Chantilli, I have really been very much grieved on honest Hébert's account. Gourville, it seems, wanted Hébert to let him know all that passed in the hotel de Condé. The latter, willing

to oblige his patron, acquainted him with certain transactions; some secret enemies, and people who envied him, took care to blow the coal, so that he is now out of favour, only for having had the misfortune to be suspected; the manner, however, in which he bears it, is a proof of his innocence. I assure you my esteem for him has not been lessened on that account: and I shall never be happy till I have placed him in some comfortable situation: he has very good sense, writes extremely well, and has, like the shepherd in the fable, proved the ingratitude of courts*; should he find my livery in his chest, he would exclaim, "Charming treasure, I resume thee with joy †!"

I have had a letter from madame de Vins, desiring me, after I leave Fontainebleau, to meet her at Pons-sonne, which I shall certainly do: mademoiselle de Meri is really an object of compassion; I frequently send to inquire after her health, and shall see her in some of my trips to Paris. The good abbé is quite well here; his Englishman has cured him of his cold too, by putting something, God knows what, into his bark. Were it not for a certain timidity that commonly attends us after a long illness, he might very well undertake his journey into Britany: but he is exactly in the same case with me, when I used to retire at half past three o'clock, for fear of the evening dews. The abbé de Grignan informs me the waters have done him great service within the last week. Do not think much, my dear child, of my long letters; I chat with you; and this, I assure you, is my sole occupation. I beg the favour of you not to kill yourself on my account, and let me not have the mortification to think I have con-

* See Fontaine's fable of the King and the Shepherd.

† He had formerly lived with madame Sévigné, and had been taken into the service of the family of Condé by Gourville's means.

tributed to shorten a life, to save which I would willingly sacrifice my own: I am now taking medicine, and am drinking the waters of which madame de Lavardin relates such wonders; I shall observe her regimen under every aspect of the moon and planets: in short, I find myself much better after it, without offence to the linseed tea. Be sure you indemnify me for all my care; you, my child, well know how. My son loses no opportunity of writing to me. He makes a great figure at the assembly of the estates, where he is a man of the first consequence; my only fear is, that he may become too good a Breton. He mentions you with great affection; I endeavour to accommodate matters, by telling him you are his *dove*, and that you love him. Trust me, I shall take care to tell your madame de Chat all my fine vagaries. Adieu, my beloved child, I embrace you with the most ardent affection: were I not alone, my letters would not be so long; but be not led astray by this bad example; it is because I have nothing else to do.

LETTER DLXVIII.

TO THE SAME.

Livri, Friday, October 6, 1679.

You had contrary winds; I am far from being surprised at it; you are pretty well accustomed to them, both on the Rhone and on shore. I fancy, my dear child, they are unwelcome visitors, come where they will; and I can easily guess how much they embarrass you. There is even some danger in them; and I commend your prudence in honouring M. de Vardes's bathing-place with your presence, instead of proceeding to Valence. There is no contending with a whirlwind.

Father Morel of the oratory is arrived here; he is an excellent man; he brought St. Aubin with him, who remains with us. I wish from my heart M. de Grignan could have heard this father; he thinks it a mortal sin to indulge in pleasure while we are in debt! such expenses are, in his opinion, a robbery, which deprive us of the means of satisfying the claims of justice. He is, in short, very rigid, and there is no such thing as coming to a composition with him. But let us now talk of Paulina*; dear, lovely child! is it possible I

* Paulina de Grignan, born in 1674, and married in 1695, to the marquis de Simiane, was noticed at five or six years of age, for the agreeableness of her wit, as well as the beauty of her person. Her letters were already looked upon as performances in which the pleasing and the natural were equally combined†. She had scarcely entered her fourth year, when she would occasionally utter repartees full of wit and pleasantry‡. She was not more than thirteen when she wrote, at madame de Grignan's request, a small piece of devotion which the brightest genius might have been proud of. It is easy to guess how a person thus favoured by nature must turn out, educated under the eyes of a mother and grandmother, whose good sense seemed as it were transfused into her. She excelled not only in the epistolary style, but also in the poetic, though she never wrote but for amusement. The following are some lines of hers, for the preservation of which we are indebted to chance only, and which afford some proof of the truth of what has been asserted. They were written on occasion of her last journey into Provence, where, as heiress of the whole fortune of the Grignans, she was engaged in a law-suit with M. de Grignan's creditors, before the parliament of Aix.

Lorsque j'étois encore cette jeune Pauline,
J'écrivois dit-on joliment;
Et sans me piquer d'être une beauté divine,
Je ne manquois pas d'agrément.
Mais depuis que les Destinées
M'ont transformée en pilier de palais,
Que les cours de plusieurs années
A fait insulte à mes attraits,

† See Letters November 8, 1679; and January 12, 1680.

‡ See Letter October 27, 1677.

could ever have been so handsome as she is? and yet they say I was very pretty at her age. I am delighted that she reminds you of me: I am aware you wanted no such remembrancer; but it nevertheless gives me great pleasure. You draw an admirable portrait of her, and I shall not fail to believe all you tell me on the subject. I am astonished she has not become dull and

C'en est fait, à peine je pense:
Et quand par un heureux succès,
Je gagnerai tout en Provence,
J'ai toujours perdu mon procès.

Which may be thus translated:

"In my younger days, when I was the gay and sprightly Pauline, I was told that I wrote prettily, and, without being a perfect beauty, I might boast of some attractions. But since Fate has transformed me into a pillar of the law, and time has stolen my former graces, the scene is changed; I have almost lost the faculty of thinking; and if by good fortune I should gain my cause in Provence, I should still find myself unsuited."

Madame de Simiane likewise possessed, in a most eminent degree, the talent of elocution, and the art of pleasing, without the least tincture of affectation. Her conversation was gay and sparkling, but always confined within the bounds of the strictest decorum. But as the state of human nature will not allow of so many rare qualities without some alloy, we must not be surprised when we are informed, that there was a blemish in this admirable lady, which was a little inequality of temper. It may, however, be said in her praise, even as to this, that as her heart had no share in it, so it was never known to have lost her a friend; and her company was by no means the less delightful, nor the less courted. As she inherited the noble sentiments of her illustrious grandmother, she loved justice beyond every thing human, and was a sure protector of merit in distress. A soul elevated, munificent, and compassionate—a heart sincere, sensible, and upright, formed the essential part of her character. The solid principles of true religion, in which she was brought up, shone forth in her, amidst the bustle of courts and secular affairs; and never with so much splendor as in the last years of her life, which she employed wholly in the exercise of the most sublime virtues of Christianity.

stupid in that convent; how glad I am you have taken her away! keep her at home, my child, and do not part with so rich a treasure: Providence will be her guard. I advise you, not to be under any apprehension of setting your affections on her, even though you should be obliged to marry her in Béarn. The mesdemoiselles de Grignan had great reason to be charmed with their father's castle; but then, good heavens, what a laborious undertaking to get there! You should have told me, my dear, whether it occasioned you any heat in your stomach or agitation in your blood. What a dismal circumstance was it at parting to entertain such just fears of your health! I think I hear the roaring of these abominable north-easterly winds that take away your breath. Alas! could I complain of what I felt, when I had only your absence to endure? I thought it was impossible for any torment to exceed it; but I find my present situation so much worse, that I should now think it, bad as it was, a state of perfect tranquillity. I had at least this to comfort me, in believing you would some day or other take pity on us both, would allow yourself a reasonable time to recover from your fatigue, to refresh yourself, and to cool your blood; but you take no care of yourself; you sleep little, eat little, and are always at your writing-desk. My dear child, if you love me, allow me the consolation of thinking you are not quite neglectful of your health. My dear Paulina, be careful of your beautiful mamma. I am quite well.

We have now the most charming weather in the world. The good abbé is perfectly cured; his cold and fever have left him: this Englishman is a divine creature. We have no thoughts at present of going farther than Livri. There is a certain timidity after severe illness, that makes us afraid of going to any distance from medical aid.

You make me laugh at your account of the conduct of the two sisters *; the eldest takes care, in her letters from Lyons, to mention all the great names with which she is honoured: and it is really excellent in the other to say how earnestly she is pressed to go to Chantilli; what ridiculous vanity! as if M. de la Rochefoucault thought of this journey the minute after he had mentioned it; he mentioned it to me slightly, and I told it to them again. His grandson † has been dangerously ill since, and he has said no more about the Chantilli expedition; yet this is the party she is so much pressed and entreated to join; it would have been a difficult task to have enticed her away. There are manners to which I cannot reconcile myself: I had rather be alone in this solitary avenue.

St. Aubin and I were there yesterday; he read whilst I listened, and at the same time enjoyed that pretty little prospect you know so well: I wished you had some of the air I was inhaling. We heard a French horn at the bottom of the forest, and in an instant a rustling among the trees; we looked, it was a hound. "What's that?" cried St. Aubin. "One of M. de Senlis's almoners ‡," said I. With that he burst into an immoderate fit of laughter. This, I assure you, is the most important event that has happened, or is likely to happen to us in this part of the world: you see I cannot want for leisure, since I employ my time in writing such trifles.

I shall write to Pelisson in favour of Montgobert's brother, considering it as a duty incumbent on me. I beg you would use no ceremony in employing me in

* Mesdemoiselles du Gué Bagnols, sisters of madame de Coulanges.

† M. de la Rocheguyon.

‡ Dennis Sanguin, bishop of Senlis, brother of Lewis Sanguin, marquis de Livri, was extremely fond of hunting, and often took that exercise in the forest of Livri.

commissions of all kinds, the best amusement I can possibly have in your absence. I have just met with one I little expected; it is a volume of Montaigne, which I did not know I had brought with me. What a charming writer he is! what a delightful companion! he is my old friend, but, from being so old, he is in a manner new again. I cannot read without tears what marshal de Montlac says of his regret for not having communicated his sentiments to his son, and for keeping him in the dark as to the affection he entertained for him. I beg you would read this passage (madame d'Estissac has it), on the affection of parents for their children*. Heavens! how much good sense this book contains!

My son cuts a most splendid figure at the assembly of the states. He sends a thousand affectionate remembrances to you, talks of nothing but your welfare, and is eternally expressing his fears in regard to your weak state of health. In short, his *doux* is his only theme: I take care, in my turn, to give your love to him; I am the mediatrix (*conciliante*), as Langlade says. I am extremely anxious to know whether you sleep well, and whether Guisoni has given you advice, which you have thought proper to follow. They say ice is very bad for your lungs; you have now no right to prescribe for yourself, the affair is decided; your life depends on your future conduct. The good abbé has been just telling me, that I ought to ask you to send me Paulina; that her company would not only please but amuse me, and that I am more qualified than ever to educate her properly: I was delighted with this speech; let us lay it by for use; we will think of it one day or other. An idea, however, has just come into my head, that you might possibly refuse her to me, and that you have not

* It is well known that J. J. Rousseau has taken many thoughts and expressions from this chapter, which are the ornament of his *Emilius*.

the best opinion in the world of me. My dear child, keep this opinion to yourself, if you really entertain it, for I am sensible it is unjust, and that you do not yet know me sufficiently : it would be a delightful occupation to me to treasure up the wonders of this dear child.

Do you not love her, my dear mesdemoiselles de Grignan? You ought to write to me, and tell me a thousand little things, but in an easy and natural way, without making a toil of it; and above all, you ought to tell me how your dear mother-in-law does; by this exercise you would learn to write in an easy and unaffected style, as we do. I wish the little man to continue the exercise of the mall; and would rather he might be allowed to play with the left hand alternately, than give up playing altogether, and by this means become more skilful. St. Aubin has a mall here, and plays extremely well. I tell him wonders of his little flat-nosed girl, and ask him how, from a state of hatred and contempt, he has arrived at the esteem and affection he now discovers : he is somewhat embarrassed ; his mouth is full of hot peas, as M. de la Rochefoucault says, when a person is at a loss for an answer.

M. de Grignan, I am watching your motions. I see you coming ; I assure you, that if you do not inform me yourself, of the health of your wife, after the fatigues of her journey, I shall be very much dissatisfied with you. Pray, sir, is this what you promised me at parting? "Trust to me alone ; I will be responsible for every thing." I am afraid you take too little care of that precious health. Should I be so fortunate as to receive a line from you, as I flatter myself I shall, I will make you ample amends.

LETTER DLXIX.

TO THE SAME.

Lirri, Wednesday, October 11, 1679.

I EXPECTED this letter of the first with great impatience. The rains, I find, have detained it; this is another evil of our separation; it spoils every thing. I assure you I did not fail to figure to myself the most frightful circumstances in the world; and, to speak the truth, I am not easy in regard to your health, as I cannot depend on what you tell me, and even M. de Grignan is silent. Poor Montgobert, the only one in whom I can place any confidence, is ill: the young de Grignans will say nothing but what you please, and I am abandoned to the mercy of my imagination. The coldness and numbness in your legs, which you make so light of, at least to me, alarms me dreadfully: indeed this must not be neglected; were I in your place, I would follow Guisoni's advice, and he is far from treating it slightly. I would take the journey he recommends to you: I would take my time, and would esteem it a thing of the most essential consequence; and would not leave my poor limbs benumbed, dead, and insensible, as you do: in short, I would warm and animate them, and would remove the torture they made me suffer every evening. It is not living, my dear child, to exist under so much discomfort. I would insist on your taking this journey, were I in M. de Grignan's place, and had as much power over you as he has. In short, you are right in believing that I often employ my thoughts about these things, and that all the philosophy, resignation, and distractions in the world, cannot possibly divert my attention from them. When I am in society,

I bear them as well as I can: but to say this thought is not indelibly engraved in my heart, ah, my dear child! you are too well acquainted with the nature of my love to doubt this. And you talk of my health! my health! There is great propriety in the expression, for I never was better in my life, I have told you so twenty times over; you are wholly taken up with my health; whilst I am uneasy, and with too much reason, about your illness. Guisoni wishes me to be bled, because it would do me good; the English physician says it is death to be bled for the rheumatism, and that if I take away the blood which destroys the watery humours, I shall be as ill as I was four years ago. Which of the two am I to believe? I will take the middle course; will take medicine once a month, as I have done for these two months; will take the waters and linseed tea, which is all I stand in need of, except, what is still better, your health. This is a long sermon, my dearest child, on a subject which can hardly fail of being tiresome to you: but is in vain for you to attempt to hinder me from wholly thinking of you in your present situation.

LETTER DLXX.

TO THE SAME.

Pomponne, Friday, October 13, 1679.

I AM now with the most agreeable people in the world: they had no sooner arrived at Pomponne, than madame de Vins sent me a letter, to beg I would come to visit them if I could. I went there yesterday evening; the master and mistress of the house received me in the kindest manner: but madame de Vins appeared to have so great a regard for you, that I cannot suffer myself to

doubt what I before thought of her sentiments towards you. We had a great deal of conversation about your going, your stay, your health, and even your return; for we cannot, as you once said, help making the future present to us. We turn every thing we can lay hold of in every point of view; it would be idle to repeat all our conversations, you can easily guess them, and besides I should never have done. Madame de Vins has written to you, she will let you know every thing new she hears. Pray express to her, that you place all the civilities she has shewn me to your account. Her friendship is as suitable to me, as her age is the reverse; but then she is mistress of so much good sense and judgement, that she may be considered old in this respect, as well as you, who have experienced as many miseries as most young people have done. I told her of a quarrel that has taken place between messieurs de Ventadour, d'Aumont, and the chevalier de Tilladet: M. de la Rochefoucault is to accommodate matters between them; but finds it so troublesome an affair, that, as madame de la Fayette informs me, he had rather undertake to write an epic poem; I will tell you more about it on Wednesday. I received your letters yesterday on my coming here, so that I delivered that for madame de Vins myself. I go to-morrow to Paris; I want to see the chevalier, and to take leave of La Garde, who, it is said, goes on Tuesday. I intend to save them the trouble of coming to Livri, the roads to this place being already so bad. You will be surprised, and vexed, at the same time, to receive orders so soon to set out for the assembly*; you will hardly have time to take a moment's rest. But then this hurry is attended with one very great advantage; for, depend

* The states of Provence.

upon it; M. de Vendome * will not go to Provence. M. de Pomponne told me this with great pleasure; so that all orders are to be addressed to M. de Grignan. I fancy the assembly is opened by this time, so that business is settled; you see the good and the bad, the sweet and the bitter, my child, blended in every thing: your stay at home cannot be longer than November; but then you are now governors. M. de Pomponne is as sensible of this as you can be; I never in my life met with so amiable a man; he begged me to inform you that he was extremely mortified on a double account, both in regard to your absence, and your ill state of health.

I embrace M. de Grignan, in the first place, and wonder at you both for being so fond of my letters: I am always astonished at your compliments on this subject; they are written with such rapidity that I never feel either their value or their insignificance. Such as they are, you will receive but too many of them, as I shall of yours, though they are, notwithstanding, the only comfort of my life: but then they are very sad things, when I compare them with what I hold infinitely dearer; I live but in this hope. I find I have wandered out of my road, but I shall now return to it. First, then, I embrace M. de Grignan, and am glad to find he has sincerity enough to acknowledge I give him a sketch of the manner in which he ought to love you; let him try to keep a little on this string, I mean, principally, in what concerns your health: let them call it importunity if they will; I, for my part, cannot allow it to be so. Whatever relates to the life of one we love, can never be a matter of indifference or tranquillity. If M. de Grignan had loved madame de Saint Simon as much as I love

* Governor of Provence.

you, begging his love's pardon, he would not have been easy at seeing her in your situation ; let him reflect on this truth, which shall be his lesson for to-day, since I am obliged to be his school-mistress in love. I embrace him then, first ; and who next ? why, mesdemoiselles his daughters, and my little boy, whom I am so fond of, and Paulina, with all her charms ; and what shall I say of you, my beloved ? not a syllable, except that you occupy the whole of that heart, you think so learned in the affairs of love and friendship.

LETTER DLXXI.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Wednesday, October 18, 1679.

I AM come here on several trifling affairs ; the good abbé is here too, and is well. One of these was, to see the chevalier de Grignan ; the sight of him affected me sensibly : I know the interest he takes in your health ; we had a long conversation upon the subject, and he is a proper judge of what I feel on your account. I expected to take leave of M. de la Garde, but he does not go so soon ; he is always employed in matters that give me cause to admire the goodness of his heart. We are at the hotel de Carnavalet, and I think we could not do better than stop here. The *worthy* entered immediately into your plans in regard to the fitting up of your apartment. There came in, very opportunely, a gentleman we have business with in the absence of M. d'Agaurri : he was so much convinced of the conveniency of this little alteration, that he wishes to be the architect himself ; he understands the subject perfectly : he only begs to be allowed time to write to M. d'Agaurri, who is in Dauphiné, to obtain his consent to attack the old

chimney-piece ; he has no doubt of obtaining it ; as soon as this is effected it will be done with all possible expedition, and will be a great improvement. The only misfortune is, that it will cost you less than you supposed. I must, however, allow, that this hotel de Car-naulet is a dismal place without you. My only support must be the hope of seeing you in it, not like a bird of passage, or a courier, but like an inhabitant, who has no interest in a more distant dreary country, and who resolves to breathe an air that agrees better both with her business and her health.

I am vexed to find Paulina is driven from the house, as, indeed, I fancy you yourself are by this time : for you will hardly suffer your convocation to be put off, in order to give the governor time to change his mind ; there is no appearance that he will do so this year. It is said, that his majesty will soon begin the negotiations about the marriage with Bavaria, by the president Colbert, who, it is said, is to set out shortly ; but this is, at present, building castles in the air.

I think I mentioned to you the quarrel between the duke de Ventadour and the duke d'Aumont ; the latter was returning from Bourbon with his wife, and the duchess de Ventadour, and the chevalier de Tilladet. The duke de Ventadour was at an estate he has in the same county, called La Motte. He had desired his wife to come to him there, and sent, at the same time, to invite the whole company, but was refused ; he then came himself, but was ill received, because, following the company about from dinner-time till bed-time, his conversation was mixed continually with menaces and reproaches ; in short he was like don Quixote, pistol in hand, threatening and challenging the gentlemen. The chevalier treated him as a person fit only for Bedlam. At length, the ladies arrived in great fear at Paris,

where the king, being informed of what had happened, sent a guard to take care of madame Ventadour, so that she is now under the protection of his majesty. What think you the monster did? he went to the king, attended by his neighbours, that is, the princes de Condé, de Conti, messieurs de Luxembourg, Duras, Schomberg, Bellefond; and, with incredible assurance, told the king, that the chevalier de Tilladet had not paid him the *respect due to his rank*; mark the expression: he places the dukedom where it was formerly*. "Sire," said he, "I want to know why I am refused the company of my wife! what has happened to my person of late? Am I uglier, or more ill made, than formerly, when I was as much courted as I am now avoided? If I am ugly, sire, is it my fault? Had I been my own maker, I would have been like your majesty: but these are things that are not in our own disposal." In short, partly owing to this natural and proper, and at the same time unexpected, flattery, and partly to the justice of his arguments, the king was pleased with him, as well as the whole court. However, they are to be separated; the difficulty is, that he insists that his wife shall be shut up in a convent, which is a sad affair†. M. de la Rochefoucault is employed to accommodate this business, and settle matters be-

* All this is related in the *Menagiana*, Vol. II. but to disguise the actors, the scene is laid in the court of Philip II. king of Spain. It is also curious to see the different manner in which the story is told.

† This was really carried into effect. The duke de Ventadour is here painted to the life, except that it may be added, that he was dissipated to excess, as appears by a witticism of madame de Cornuel's, in the Letter of the 11th of September, 1676. But it must be also stated, that his wife retaliated most scandalously with the chevalier de Tilladet, whom the *Amours des Gaules* represent as one of the greatest scoundrels of the age. He was related to Louvois.

LETTERS OF

tween the gentlemen. I told you how much this disagreeable affair occupies him.

My son is solitary at the Rocks, and has managed matters so well at the assembly of the states, that I really believe, in less than two years, he will have the honour of that splendid deputation. He swears upon his honour he loves you very dearly; I will preserve the love that exists between you, or perish in the attempt. I have paid your compliments to all the ladies you mention; your remembrance is both a subject of joy and sorrow. Madame de la Fayette wishes to distinguish herself in this new bond of friendship; it will not be her fault if you are not satisfied.

I embrace M. de Grignan, his daughters, and his *sober* little son; it is really amusing to think of his aspiring to this title; it is by no means the character of our Bretons. As for you, my dearest child, I am yours, in the perfection M. de Grignan so much admires. I want you to tell me more of yourself; and I regret nothing so much as when I am not entertained with this agreeable subject. My apprehension lest so much writing should do you harm, damps all the pleasure I receive from the perusal of your long letters.

LETTER DLXXII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Friday, October 20, 1679.

WHAT! write letters of such an amazing length, and not say a syllable of the state of your health? I assure you I put the very worst construction upon this silence; I see the swelling in your legs is increased, since you avoid saying a word about it; and, had you been ever

so little better, I am sure you would not have been easy till you had made it known to me : this is the conclusion I have drawn. Good heavens, how happy I was when I had no uneasiness respecting your health ! and how much am I to be pitied in my present fears ! It is not that your absence is indifferent to me, who feel so sensibly the charms of your society, and who love you with so much affection ; but the delicacy of your constitution makes so strong an impression on me, as to efface the other. Let me, I entreat you, be in future acquainted with your real situation ; but be sincere in what you tell me.

The chevalier sends you all the news ; he knows more than I do, though he is a little indisposed with his arm, and of course pretty much confined to his chamber. I went to see him yesterday with the handsome abbé, for I cannot be without some of the Grignans ; but for them I should be quite lost. You know that M. de la Salle has bought M. Tilladet's place * : it is paying very dear for it, to give a hundred thousand livres to be the substitute of M. de Marsillac ; I should prefer being a subaltern in some military office. There is a great deal said about the Bavarian match : it would be diverting enough, I think, if an order of knighthood were to be instituted on this account. I know several persons who will not believe a word of it. I am convinced madame de la Fayette has a great desire to serve M. de Grignan : she knows how much I interest myself in his behalf ; and I make no doubt she will use all her influence over the chevalier. She takes viper-broth, which has recovered her strength and spirits perceptibly : she thinks it the best thing you can possibly take. The head and tail of

* Master of the wardrobe.

the viper are cut off; it is gutted and skinned; yet, even two hours after, it moves. We could not help comparing this tenacity of life to old passions; and, particularly, to some in this quarter, which are proof against all attempts to destroy them. Reproaches, calumnies, affronts, incivilities, cruelties, slights, quarrels, complaints, and menaces, are in continual motion, and there is no prospect of a termination: we flatter ourselves, that when we have once torn out the heart, the affair is at an end, and that we shall hear no more of them. Quite the contrary, they are still alive, they still keep moving. I know not whether this observation will appear to you in the same light it does to us, but we were all amused with it; there are many occasions on which we might make the application.

I see you are like to have a great deal of business on your hands; I fancy you intend going to Lambesc; you must endeavour to be in health, and to adjust a little the two ends of the year, which are deranged, and the time will slide away. I, who was formerly such a niggard, am now prodigal of it to the last degree. I am going to Livri till after All Saints; I have occasion for this little retirement. I am quite alone; I will think of settling the affairs of my conscience. I shall find the winter long enough.

Your pigeon is at the Rocks, wandering in the woods like a hermit. He has done wonders at the assembly of the states; he would fain have fallen in love with a certain mademoiselle de la Coste; he did all he could to persuade himself she was a good match, but in vain. He is going to Bodégat, and from thence to Buron, and returns, at Christmas, with M. d'Haröüis, and M. de Coulanges. This last has composed some very pretty songs. There was a mademoiselle Descartes at Rhunes,

your father's niece †, and, like him too, possessed of extreme good sense; she has a turn for poetry. My son apostrophises you, addresses his conversation to you, adores you, cannot live without his pigeon; he has deceived every body. For my part, I had always a high opinion of his regard for you, and so would every one else, were his private thoughts known: what more can be desired? Adieu, my dearest child! I will not undertake to tell you how much I love you; I think it would prove irksome in the end. I have a thousand remembrances for M. de Grignan in spite of his taciturnity. I was this morning with the chevalier and M. de la Garde, and am all in all with this family.

LETTER * DLXXIII.

MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO THE COUNT DE BUSSY.

Paris, October 4, 1679.

I SUSPECT you will not receive this letter in Burgundy, and I hope, my dear cousin, you will not. I write it at a venture. My niece of St. Mary's has told me that you are coming to Paris immediately, with my niece de Coligny. Thinking she might come alone, I made her the offer of my daughter's apartment; but I can easily conceive that you will wish to be together at Paris as much as any where else: you cannot be in better company. I have to regret, and I do regret, the loss of my daughter's society. Poor soul, she set out for Provence on the 23d of last month, in so ill a state of health, that I am very uneasy about her. This is my situation. I have spent a good deal of time at Livri. The solitude I have there enjoyed has been more con-

† Madame de Grignan was so zealous a Cartesian as to call Descartes her father.

genial to my feelings than the restraint of the world, and of visitors. I shall return there again to spend All Saints, after which I shall come back to receive you. This, I imagine, will be about the time of your arrival. I hear so little news that I will not attempt to send you any. I write in a melancholy humour; my poor children, you must come and restore me to my natural gaiety. I expect it from your lively wit, and, in the mean time, cordially embrace you both.

LETTER DLXXIV.

MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO THE COUNTESS DE GRIGNAN.

Livri, Wednesday, October 25, 1679.

I AM here alone; I was loath to suffer any irksomeness but my own. No company tempts me to begin my winter so soon. If I chose it, I could assume an air of solitude; but after hearing madame de Brisac say, the other day, that she was wholly engaged in her meditations, and had rather too much of her own company; I am proud to boast that I have passed this whole afternoon in the meadow, in conference with our sheep and cows. I have store of good books, especially Montaigne; what could I desire more, since I cannot have you? I have the favour of your last letter at this place. You fancy I am at Paris, sitting in the chimney-corner, and have, no doubt, sitting by your own, received my lamentations on the fatigue of your journey: what a dreadful thing it is to be at such a distance! It is impossible to be more astonished than I was to find you with M. and madame de Mêmes; I fancied you had been deceived, and that you were to have received them at Livri. They write to me to express how much they are charmed at the reception you have given them:

they are very desirous to see me, which is the strongest inducement for my returning so speedily.

You are in the right to suppress Paulina's modesty ; it will be worn out by the time she is fifteen : a premature and ill-timed modesty may have sad consequences. You are in jest, to thank Corbinelli for the compliment he paid your good sense. He merely thinks you superior to others ; and when he says so, he says what he thinks, and has no intention to flatter you. He would have said a word or two in my letter, on the compliments you were pleased to make him ; but this I intend to wave till my return. M. and madame de Ròhan have not thought of making him a present, out of the two thousand five hundred pistoles they received at the assembly of the states, under the title of the little prince of Leon. Some people have a strange destiny ; Corbinelli's seems to be, to hold in the most sovereign contempt what other folks prize in the highest degree. It is true, I was very much amused with his conversation, and that of the abbé de Piles * ; they agreed in many things, though there were some of harder digestion, which they seemed to chew upon. M. de Rochefoucault calls this eating hot peas ; I am sure they had a good dish of them ; for this forest is adapted for such things. The fat abbé has entered on his office of gazetteer, so you need be under no uneasiness about answers ; he is better calculated for the office than I am.

Your brother is a strange creature ; he could not, for the soul of him, help spoiling all the wonders he per-

* The same, probably, who has made himself known by his works on painting. He studied in the Sorbonne. He afterwards went to Italy with the younger Amelot, whom he educated. He was also employed in several negotiations.

formed at the assembly of the states, by a capricious taste, and an insipid, ridiculous passion. The object is a mademoiselle de la Coste, upwards of thirty years of age, without fortune or beauty : even her father says he is very sorry for it, and that it is by no means a fit match for M. de Sévigné ; he writes me so himself ; I commend and thank him for his prudence. What do you suppose your brother has done since ? he has never quitted his damsel, but has followed her to Rennes and Lower Brittany, where she has gone under pretence of visiting Tonquedec ; he has almost turned her brain, and has put her out of conceit with a very proper match she had in some degree contracted ; it is the talk of the whole province. M. de Coulanges, and all my friends in Britany, write to me about it, and are all persuaded he will certainly marry her. For my own part, I am convinced of the contrary ; but I ask him why he so unnecessarily disgraces his poor head, after such a promising commencement ? why he makes the lady reject an offer she now looks upon with the most sovereign contempt ? and why this perfidy ? If it is not perfidy, it will have some other name, since I am determined, let what will happen, never to sign the marriage-contract. If he be really in love, so much the worse, for this is a source of the most extravagant actions ; but as I think him incapable of that passion, I should scruple, were I in his place, thus wantonly to wound the repose and the fortune of one he can so easily dispense with. He is now at the Rocks, from whence he writes to me about this journey to Tonquedec's, but not a syllable of his Dulcinea, or of this noble flame. Only in general terms, a great many fine things, and compliments without number. In short, it is an affair I leave entirely to the disposal of Providence,

for what can I do in it? I am however certain it will come to nothing; I write him elaborate letters, which will have no other effect than what pleases God.

Pray did I write you about this mademoiselle de ***? No: I recollect; it was to my son. She is married to M. de ***, who has actually received, contrary to my opinion, a hundred thousand crowns with her, a hundred thousand crowns down on the table. This sum has dazzled them, for they are a miserly set: but with this he has received the silliest, the most extravagant, the most this, that, and the other, that can possibly be imagined. Besides the expense of having been dressed out at the wedding by her father like an empress; she has thrown away twelve thousand livres on a jaunt to Fontainebleau, where she got into the queen's chariot (not a word of jest in this), gave fifty pistoles to the footmen, gamed, and so forth, all to the same tune. At length she thought fit to return: this is the mischief; the father and mother, overwhelmed with grief at this expense, curse the day and hour of the marriage, and went to relieve their burdened minds at madame de Lavardin's, who warned them beforehand of what would happen. The husband came afterward, saying, with simplicity enough, that it rained letters upon him from all quarters, informing him of his wife's past and present ill conduct, and that he was in perfect despair. Madame de Lavardin laughs in her sleeve, and relates it very humourously. In short, not to trouble you with her answers nor her advice, the sum of the matter is this: the large handsome house, hired for them against their return, is given up, and the journey to Auvergne has no time fixed for its continuance. This is a fine story for you, and one which you are like to care about! it is from mere idleness that I trouble you with such trash.

LETTER DLXXV.

TO THE SAME.

Livri, Wednesday, being All-Saints-day, 1679.

You must by this time have received the letter I wrote you from Pomponne, enclosed in the same packet with madame de Vins'; but your storms have put every thing in confusion. How much you are in extremes in Provence! your heats, your dews, your north-easterly winds, your unseasonable rains, your autumnal thunders, all are violent; you know not what soft or temperate means. Your rivers overflow their banks, your fields are inundated: your Durance is always as if the devil were in him; your Isle de Brouteron is often under water. In short, my child, when I think of the delicacy of your constitution, which has to contend with things of so violent a nature, I tremble in every limb: and pray, is not M. de Grignan, who loves you, as much terrified as I am? For my part, it is impossible I can get rid of my fears, while I see you refusing the assistance of the surest remedies.

I saw little madame de Némond the other day: she has been extremely ill and her lungs were affected, but she is recovering rapidly, by taking asses' milk morning and evening: she had a cough and hoarseness that took away her voice. I do not ask you to take asses' milk, as it does not agree with you, and you have such a disgust to it; I only lament, as a singular misfortune, that you are deprived of so sure and so salutary a remedy. I am always regretting the time when I had nothing to complain of but your absence; what a dreadful circumstance it is, to be under such apprehensions as I am, and with so much reason! I have paid all the attention to

mademoiselle de Meri, that was compatible with my solitude at Livri, which I wished to enjoy as much as I could. She is no longer in danger, as she told me the other day, and her health is not so bad. M^o and madame de Mereuil, madame de Saint-Pouanges, with my good neighbours mesdames de Coulanges, Bagnols, and Sanzei, are all occupied with her. The chevalier is also very attentive to her; I shall not be behindhand in my duty as soon as I return to Paris: were we not so nearly related as we are, and did not the season and religion prompt me to assist her, it would be a sufficient motive with me to know that any attention to her would give you pleasure; nay, it would induce me to do a thousand times more. You may, therefore, be perfectly easy on that subject, as well as in regard to her situation, which is by no means so deplorable as it was. I shall speak with Du.Chêne relatively to your little physician, whom we employ in killing a few patients in our quarter, that we may have an opportunity of seeing how he succeeds; it would be a thousand pities that he should be deprived of the privilege of killing with impunity*. Not that the season is favourable. This Englishman's medicine, which will soon be made public, renders all your physicians, with their purgings and bleedings, perfectly useless.

My son is in mournful solitude at the Rocks; he tells me, that the first evening he happened to be alone in my apartment, with the keys of my cabinets, which had been given him, he was assailed by a dismal thought, and so much like an event that will happen some day or other, that he could not help weeping, just like the good abbé on receiving the sacrament. He gives me the strongest assurances he will never marry

* See Argan's reception in Moliere's *Malade Imaginaire*.

the person I mentioned to you ; all the world, however, tells me, that a great deal of nonsense passes between them ; he must needs go to Tonquedee's, which is but two leagues from his flame : it is the talk of the whole province, and every body exclaims at the weakness of his conduct in the affair. He assures me he has no desire to play the fool ; but as I know he is weak, and is every day acquainting me with his variations, that he is of two or three different minds in an instant, I tell him, the safest way is not to visit her at all ; that it is a dangerous thing to tempt Providence ; that one misfortune is often enough to ruin us ; and that when he is duped, he will curse the day in which he engaged in so silly an affair : that there will then be no remedy, and that let what will happen, I shall have nothing to answer for, since I have already, as well as all my friends, told him all that can possibly be said on the subject. I am extremely anxious to hear what mademoiselle de Grignan's answer will be to the proposal that is to be made you. I beg you not to prevent the little marquis and Paulina from coming and amusing themselves with me : I shall receive them as I now embrace them, that is, most affectionately. As to M. de Grignan, I ask his pardon for the ill I have said of his country ; I can see nothing there but Furies, whilst you are in it. I shall apologise to him, when I hear of the fine weather you enjoy at Lambesc, and which, I must acknowledge, I have often admired as well as others. I charge him to be careful of his dear wife.

LETTER DLXXVI.

TO THE SAME.

Livri, Thursday evening, November 2, 1679.

I WRITE to you this evening, my beloved child, because I wish to go to-morrow morning to Pomponne. Madame de Vins invited me the other day so courteously that I must go to see her, and M. de Pomponne, who is more easily managed by dining with him once at Pomponne, than by a whole month's soliciting at Paris. You would have me rely entirely on your care of your health, and I willingly consent to it, if it be true that you are quite another person in this respect. It is in reality so natural to do this, and your neglect has always appeared to me a thing so extraordinary, that I am led to believe, by this instance, that reason has once more resumed its empire in your mind. Do therefore as you say, my dear child; take milk and broths, and esteem the care of your health as the dearest of all earthly considerations: be assured that care and regimen are not alone sufficient to recover lungs like yours; but constancy and perseverance in them: for to take milk for a fortnight, and then say, I have taken milk, is little to the purpose; believe me, my child, it would be mocking us, and yourself chiefly, to act in this manner. I would, besides, have you to know another thing, which is, that without health it is impossible to do any thing; all is at a stand, and the least trifle costs us incredible pains to accomplish: in short, to want health is, not to live. The situation you are now in is by no means a durable one; if you would be well, you must first be better. I am sorry for the weather you have, and especially for your terrible inundations: I dread your Durance, as I

dread a wild beast. There is yet no mention of blue ribbons; should there be any, and should M. de Grignan be under the necessity of returning, I shall give him a hearty but a sad welcome; for, in short, instead of ordering your journey as you did, it would have been much more natural, as well as more rational in you, to have waited M. de Grignan's arrival here: but divination is past, and as you consulted M. de Grignan's pleasure, as they used to consult the entrails of victims in days of yore, you read so clearly that he wished you to accompany him, that, having no sort of consideration for your health, it was impossible for you not to go, as you did. You ought to lift up your eyes to heaven, and beg of God to grant your return; and that it may not be like that of a bird of passage, but like a woman who has nothing to do at Provence, who dreads the easterly winds at Grignan, and who resolves to settle and recover her health in this country. I fancy myself qualified to write a treatise on affection; there are a thousand things depending on it, a thousand things to be shunned, in order to prevent those we love from smarting for it: there are innumerable instances where we give them pain, and in which we might alleviate their feelings, were we to reflect and to turn things in all the points of view we ought, out of regard to the object of our love. In short, I could make it appear in my book, that there are a thousand different ways of proving our regard without talking of it; as well as of saying by actions, that we have no real regard, even whilst the treacherous tongue is making protestations to the contrary. I mean no one in particular, but what I have written, I have written.

My son writes me strange nonsense: he tells me there is a certain *he* who adores me, and another *he* who hates me, and that they had a battle the other day,

In the mall at the Rocks. I wrote him back word, that I heartily wished one had killed the other, that I might not be the mother of three children ; that the last was the occasion of all my maternal misery, and that could he succeed in strangling him with his own hands, I should be but too happy in the survivor. I admire Paulina's letter ; pray is it her own hand-writing ? I think not : but as to the style, it is easy to recognise it. Dear child, I wish you could contrive to send her to me in one of your packets : I shall only be comforted for not seeing her, by the new claims she will create in my heart. I am now going to answer her. I quit this place with regret ; the country is still pleasant ; this avenue, notwithstanding the havoc made by the caterpillars, with your permission, has taken the liberty to sprout again, and is greener than in the spring. The palisades, both great and small, are now adorned with all the beauteous dyes of autumn, which the painters know so well how to turn to their own advantage. The high elms are somewhat bare, but that is of no great consequence : the country, in general, is in all its glory : I pass the days alone in reading, and am not sensible of any wearisomeness, but such as I am never without, the want of your company. I know not how I am to be employed at Paris ; nor do I know of any thing to induce me to go there : I therefore go with reluctance ; the good abbé, however, tells me we have business there, and that we have finished all we had to do here. Let us go then. This year, I must acknowledge, has passed rapidly enough ; but then I am entirely of your opinion as to the month of September ; I really fancied it as long as six. When I get to Paris, I will send you word how mademoiselle de Meri is. I could never have supposed madame de Charmes would have become what we may call a dried chip : alas ! what dreadful havoc

an ill state of health makes! I beseech you to let the care of yours be the first and most important duty of your life; next to this, and M. de Grignan, to whom you have justly given the preference of all other persons, if you will allow me to occupy the place that is my right, you shall have no cause to repent it. I shall be satisfied to find that I am not much behind M. de Grignan, and that you think I have a claim to be consulted in my turn.

LETTER DLXXVII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Wednesday, November 8, 1679.

I ARRIVED here on Saturday, as I informed you. I dined on Friday at Pomponne, where madame de Vins received one of your letters. We had a great deal of conversation about you. M. de Pomponne chid her for not mentioning his name in her letter to you: their quarrel was really amusing, and would have made you laugh. They will be a fortnight longer at Pomponne. For my own part, I regretted Livri; it was cutting into the quick to make me leave it; it was a most delightful solitude, and I am really angry at the present fine weather. I saw the two Grignans and M. de la Garde on my arrival; so I leave you to guess the subject of our conversation. I went in the morning to see mademoiselle de Meri, and found her rather better. I have seen Du Chêne, and, I know not how, happened to mention your illness. He loves you, and I find he is more affected by it, as well as more intent on curing you, than the rest of them. He was quite thunderstruck at the swellings in your legs, and the shiverings and pains which go to your very heart. He wishes you to rub the spine of your back

with a mixture of brandy and cold-drawn walnut-oil ; this, he says, will open the pores in the parts from whence the watery humours proceed, and will give you relief. He commends you for leaving off milk ; he advises you, instead of milk, which does not agree with you, to take freely of barley-water and chicken-broth, with cooling seeds ; and says, that if you do not correct the ill qualities of your blood, you may experience the most serious consequence. He begs you, in the most earnest manner, not to neglect taking the water de Sainte-Reine, and says you well know its efficacy. He repeated this three or four times. Du Chêne thinks too, the coffee you take increases the circulation of your blood too much, and heats it, though it may possibly be of service to those who have no disorder but on their lungs ; but that he never prescribed it to any one in your situation, and that it is easy to judge by your thinness, which increases in proportion as you continue to use it ; that it is to be feared that you will perceive too late that the strength you think coffee gives you, is only imaginary, as it is owing to nothing but the too quick circulation of your blood, which wants, on the contrary, rather to be calmed and tempered. Think of this, my dear child ! I only repeat what Du Chêne told me with great concern and regard for you. You may possibly be tired of the subject ; but how could I help enlarging upon it ? Put yourself in my place, and then guess what my fears and my feelings are. You love Du Chêne ; this is his advice, and what he obliged me to promise I would tell you.

You are now at Lambesc, my dear child, though a more honourable cause invited you farther into Provence. I am extremely uneasy for you, on account of the tiresome compliments and visits you must receive ; you are by no means in a situation to bear all this.

There is no mention of the king's journey into the provinces, nor of the blue ribbons. The king is resolved not to grant any, on account of the multitude of pretenders. What I tell you, comes from two different and certain authorities; and I must now tell you, that M. de la Rochefoucauld, and madame de la Fayette, send you a thousand compliments: mesdames de Lavardin and de Mouri, send you no less. I have not yet seen the marchioness d'Huxelles. The chevalier is to write you all the news. I imagine marshal de Bellefond will hardly get the better of his disorder.

You are perfectly satisfied with the obliging disposition of mademoiselle de Grignan; it is a great happiness for you. But, my child, where have you learned that you are a dragon? how can you delight in using these expressions? Did you not agree to every thing I wished? Did you not pass the winter in Brittany, when it was necessary? and the summer at Livri? Did you object to mope away your time at your ease? I conjure you, not to form a wish to be otherwise than you are, except with regard to your health. But who could have imagined you would have grown so delicate and thin in so short a time? Pray, what have you done with Paulina? I sincerely wish you may have taken her with you. I made madame de Vins read her letter, who was charmed with it, as were her uncles: I think it a master-piece of ease and simplicity.

Madame de la Sabliere has certainly taken the resolution you approve of, *let us break off the sad remains*. Madame de Coulanges, what do you think I mean? No doubt the same as you. But madame de Coulanges maintains, that La Fare was never in love; it was nothing but laziness, laziness, mere laziness! and La Bassette has given proof, that all he wanted at madame de Sabliere's was only to see good company. A-propos,

madame de Villars wrote to no one on her arrival at Madrid, but to madame de Coulanges*. In this letter she sends her compliments to all her other old friends; such as madame de Schomberg, mademoiselle de l'Estrange, madame de la Fayette, &c. Madame de Villars says, that to be in Spain is sufficient to be cured of the desire of building castles there†. You see she judged well of the person she addressed her letter to, as she intended writing such pretty things: The queen of Spain said a thousand kind things to madame de Saint Chaumont‡, as she passed. Madame de Clérembault§ has not opened her mouth since. We expect

* Madame de Villars wrote several letters to madame de Coulanges during her last stay at Madrid. Those which have been preserved, amounting to thirty-seven, begin November 2, 1679, and end May 15, 1681. They are not only very amusing, but extremely curious; both in regard to the anecdotes relating to the marriage of Charles II. of England with Maria Louisa d'Orleans, and the picture which madame de Villars draws of the country and of the manners and customs of the Spanish court.

† Bâtir, or faire des châteaux en Espagne, answers to the English proverb of building castles in the air.

‡ Madame de Saint Chaumont had been governess to the children of Monsieur, before madame de Clérembault. She was at the same time the confidential friend of Madame (Henrietta of England), and in consequence of her quarrels with Monsieur was exiled. She was a very interesting woman, if we may judge by these verses of Benserade:

On vous connoît douce et spirituelle.
Votre vertu nous ravit, Saint-Chaumont :
Après de vous il fait bon avec elle,
Même sans elle il y feroit fort bon.

Of gentle manners, sprightly mien,
Saint Chaumont's virtue charms us more :
With this, she looks and shines a queen ;
Without it, we must still adore.

§ Louise-Françoise Bouthillier de Chavigni, wife of Philip de Clérembault, marshal of France, and lady of honour to the queen of Spain.

news both of the marriage and interview*. They say the princess d'Harcourt and madame de Clérembault will return immediately, and that madame de Grancey is to go all the way to Madrid. I told Brancas you complimented him on his mourning, and not on his affliction. Many persons have been drowned in the chevalier de Tourville's ship, who saved his life by swimming; I believe one of our chevaliers de Sévigné is lost among the rest. My son is in Lower Britany; I fancy his love sits pretty easily on him. Adieu, my dearest child; would to God you enjoyed as good a state of health as I do! I conjure you to write me but one word in regard to your health, and another of your affection for me; let us amuse ourselves in the best way we can; I willingly sacrifice the pleasure of reading your letters, to that of knowing you do not exhaust yourself in writing them.

FROM M. DE CORBINELLI.

You allow me then, madam, to express the regard I always have borne you, and which I shall always bear you, not only on your own account, though your merit is infinite, but for the sake of your mother, whom I adore, and who adores you.

FROM MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ.

THIS is the line he would have written you three weeks ago; believe me, he merits your esteem. We have just been reading the fine passage you mentioned to us, and think it extremely beautiful, as far as a certain period, where the author himself creates so great a diffi-

* This marriage was celebrated at Burgos, November 18.

culty, that it really appears to us, as it did to himself, insurmountable; and from which he cannot extricate himself, but in a very obscure manner; we leave those who are more enlightened than ourselves to understand his meaning.

LETTER DLXXVIII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Friday, Nov. 10, 1679.

I AM no longer a shepherdess, my poor child; I have left with regret my solitary conversation with your letters, and your image, aided by *Louison*, our cows and sheep, and the twilight, which I embraced with eagerness, because I would neither spare nor flatter myself. I am now in the refinements of the hotel de Carnavalet, where I find I am not less occupied with you, that your letters are not less dear to me, or that any thing in the world is capable of driving you from my thoughts. I shall have little news to tell you; I know scarcely any at present; but what I hear comes from good authority, and may be depended on. You assure me, my dearest child, you are perfectly well. God grant it be so; this is soon said. I wish you would not write me such long letters; I am certain they do you harm. Were it not for this consideration, you may believe I should be glad they were as long as possible; but this apprehension damps all the pleasure I receive from them. Du Chêne told me the other day, nothing could be worse for you than much writing. The time must come, my child, when you will write less; and when you are here, you must think of your health, and your recovery. We will take care to put the hotel de Carnavalet in as good order as possible for you. The good abbé wishes this

as much as I do. Pray write me no more bad accounts of yourself, nor imagine that your letters are better than your conversation: I should be unworthy of your love were I capable of entertaining such a thought. I am convinced of your affection, and I have as much relish for your society as those who are most delighted with your conversation. Ah! did you know the power of a word, a look, a kind expression, or a caress from you, and from what distant countries one of these could bring me, you would be convinced, my beauty, that nothing is equal to your presence! The account of your devotion on All-Saints' day has affected me strangely. It was delightful to cram all your little ones into the same litter: dear little party! Had I been of your council, I should have given my vote for doing just as you did, as you will see by my advice to Paulina, in the regular answer I have written her. Lovely child! it is impossible she can ever tire you. Enjoy, my love, all these little comforts, and instead of thinking of depriving yourself of them, think of the numberless evils of this mortal and transitory life.

M. de la Rochefoucault, madame de la Fayette, and Langlade, spoke of M. de Grignan yesterday, as the person in the world whom they most wished to serve; and that they would not lose a moment, nor let slip any opportunity of showing it effectually. They are going, as to an opera, to see mademoiselle de Louvois's dresses; there is not a morsel of gold stuff that costs less than twenty louis-d'ors an ell. La Langlée has exhausted her skill in combining taste with magnificence. M. de Mêmes has given a high character of M. de Grignan, and has expressed himself in this way to M. de la Rochefoucault.

I finish this letter at mademoiselle de Meri's, where I also close my packet. She is quite exhausted with

the vapours and evacuations, and is incapable of writing a single syllable: she tells you by me all she should write to you if she were able. I have been just visiting that poor chevalier who keeps his bed with pains in his neck and hip. This rheumatic humour never leaves him; I have more compassion than other people for this disorder. I am of opinion his illness will not be of long continuance; he feels the serosities already beginning to dissipate; he wants a good pumping, if the season permitted it. He gave me his letter to enclose in my packet: these poor sick people must be taken care of; all the rest of Paris is ill of a cold;

Ils ne mouroient pas tous; mais tous étoient frappés.

They died not all; though none escaped a wound*:

as you used to say. Adieu, my dear girl! I embrace you with the warmest affection, with all your great and little party.

LETTER DLXXIX.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Wednesday, Nov. 22, 1679.

WHAT I am going to tell you, my dear child, will both surprise and vex you. M. de Pomponne is out of favour; he had orders on Saturday evening, as he was returning from Pomponne, to resign his office. The king has directed that he should receive seven hundred thousand livres, and that his pension of twenty thousand livres a year, which he had as minister, should be continued to him; intending, by this, to show he was satisfied with his fidelity. It was M. Colbert who gave

* A verse of La Fontaine, in his fable of *Les Animaux Malades de la Peste*.

him this information, assuring him at the same time, that he was extremely mortified to be obliged, &c. M. de Pomponne asked him, whether he might not be allowed the honour of speaking to the king, to learn from his own mouth what fault he had committed, that brought this stroke upon him: he was told, he could not; so he wrote to the king, expressing his extreme sorrow, and his utter ignorance of what could have contributed to his disgrace; he mentioned his numerous family, and besought him to have compassion on his eight children. Immediately after, he caused the horses to be put into his carriage, and returned to Paris, where he arrived at twelve at night. M. de Chaulnes, Caumartin, and I, had been, as I wrote you, on the Friday at Pomponne, where we found him and the ladies, who received us with all the pleasure imaginable. We chatted all the evening, and played at chess: ah! what a check-mate were they preparing for him at St. Germain! He went thither the next morning, because a courier waited for him; so that M. Colbert, who thought to find him on Saturday evening, as usual, knowing he was set out for St. Germain, returned instantly, and had nearly killed his horses. For ourselves, we did not leave Pomponne till after dinner, where we left the ladies. It was necessary to inform them of what had happened, by letter; this was brought by one of M. de Pomponne's valets, who arrived at nine on the Sunday at madame de Vins' apartment; the man's precipitation, and his altered looks, made madame de Vins fancy he had brought the account of M. de Pomponne's death; so that on finding he was only disgraced, she breathed again; but she felt the extent of his misfortune, and when she was sufficiently recovered went to acquaint her sister with it. They set out that instant, leaving all the little boys in tears; and arrived in Paris at two in the after-

noon, overwhelmed with grief. You may figure to yourself this interview with M. de Pomponne, and what they felt on meeting each other in so different a situation from what they were in the evening before. I learned this sad intelligence from the abbé de Grignan, and I confess to you it pierced me to the heart. I went to their house in the evening, they saw no company in public; I went up stairs, and found them all three. M. de Pomponne embraced me without being able to utter a word; the ladies could not restrain their tears, nor I mine. You would have wept too, my child; it was really a melancholy spectacle; the circumstance of our quitting each other at Pomponne, so differently, augmented our sorrows. Poor madame de Vins, whom I left in such spirits, could hardly be recognised; a fever of a fortnight could scarcely have altered her more; she mentioned you to me, and said she was persuaded you would feel for her and M. de Pomponne's affliction, which I assured her you would. We spoke of the blow she felt from this disgrace, both in regard to her affairs, her situation, and her husband's fortune; I do assure you, she feels all this in its greatest horror. M. de Pomponne, it is true, was not a favourite, but his situation gave him an opportunity to obtain certain common things, which often make our fortune. There are many inferior situations sufficient to make the fortunes of individuals. It was besides pleasant to be thus in a manner settled at court. Good God, what a change! what retrenching, what economy, must now be made use of in this family! Eight children, and not to have had time to obtain the smallest favour! They are thirty thousand livres in debt; you may suppose how little they will have left: they are going to a miserable retreat at Paris and Pomponne. It is said so many journeys, and sometimes the attendance of couriers, even

that of Bavaria, who arrived on the Friday, and whom the king waited for with impatience, have contributed to draw this misfortune upon them *. But you will easily comprehend in this the ways of Providence, when I tell you, the president Colbert has his place; as he is in Bavaria, his brother officiates in his absence, and wrote to congratulate, and to surprise him, on the back of the letter, as if by mistake; "To MM. Colbert, minister and secretary of state." I paid my compliments of condolence to the unfortunate family. Reflect a little on the power of this family, as well at home as abroad, and you will easily perceive it far exceeds that of the other house where a wedding is going on †. My poor child, this is a long and circumstantial account;

* The memoirs and letters of the contemporary writers all agree that M. de Pomponne's negligence was the cause of his disgrace. The more modern historians, even Hénault, keep to the received opinion. How could they fail to remark, that Lewis XIV., in a memorandum written in his own hand, and mentioned by Voltaire, has himself explained very differently the cause of this minister's dismissal? "All that passed through his hands, lost the grandeur and strength it ought to have displayed, as being the orders of a king of France." These are his own words. Every one knows, in reality, that it was from the treaty of Nimègue, a single year prior to M. de Pomponne's disgrace, the dominion and authority of Lewis XIV. affected over all Europe, were dated. From that period his ministers treated the foreign ambassadors with insulting arrogance. The famous chambers of reunion were established. Strasbourg was taken possession of by violence. Advances were made into Italy. No conciliatory measures were adopted. All the states were irritated.

But besides M. de Pomponne's having the crime of leaning towards the Jansenists, Louvois and Colbert, though enemies to each other, both laboured to ruin him; the first to place his friend M. Courtin in his situation, and the second his brother Colbert de Croissy. The last succeeded, to the great rage of Louvois.

† Madeleine-Charlotte de Tellier, daughter of M. de Louvois, married the next day, 23 November, Francis duke of Rochefoucault and of Rocheguyon, grandson of M. de la Rochefoucault.

but I think, on such occasions, we cannot be too particular; you are pleased we should always be talking to you, and in this instance I have perhaps complied with your desires too much. When your courier arrives, I shall have no where to send him; and it is an additional mortification to me, to find I shall henceforth be entirely useless to you; though it is true, I was already so, by means of madame de Vins; but that was meant in mere jest. In short, my child, all is now at an end, and such is the way of the world, M. de Pomponne is better qualified than any man upon earth to support this misfortune with courage and with truly Christian resignation. Those who have acted like him in prosperity, cannot fail to be pitied in their misfortunes.

I must, however, add a word or two respecting your letter; it gave me real consolation; you tell me the little boy is quite recovered, and that I should be satisfied with yourself if I were to see you. Ah, my child, it is indeed true; what a delightful sight would it be to me, to see you really occupied with the care of your health, by taking the necessary repose to recruit your wasted strength! it is a pleasure you have never yet afforded me. You find this care is by no means useless; you already discover its salutary effects: and if I torture myself here by my endeavours to inspire you with the same attention to your welfare, you plainly see I have good reason.

LETTER DLXXX.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Friday, Nov. 24, 1679.

Good heavens! what a charming letter have I just received from you! what exquisite pleasure is it to hear you reason thus! What you say on the subject of medicine delights me. I am persuaded, that, with that understanding and quickness of apprehension with which God has endowed you, you might, with a little application, soon outstrip the physicians themselves: you might indeed want a little experience, and perhaps too you might not kill with impunity as they do; but I would much sooner trust your judgement of a disease than theirs. The only real concern of life is undoubtedly the care of our health; the world seems to agree in this; the general question is, How are you? how are you? and yet we are in general wholly ignorant of every particular relating to this important science. Go on then, go on, my child; finish the course of your studies; the scarlet gown is all the diploma you will stand in need of, as in the play*. Pray, what do you mean by sending us your little physician? I assure you, ours have entirely lost their credit here, except three or four of our acquaintance, and who prescribe the Englishman's recipe; all the rest are held in utter abhorrence. This Englishman recovered marshal de Bellefond the other day from death's door. I do not think the first physician has the right secret.

Is it then true, my child, you have got the better of your complaints? no more pains in the chest, no co-

* Moliere's *Malade Imaginaire*.

lic, no pain in the legs? This is as it should be. You see the advantage of repose, and taking care to recruit yourself. Can you be angry with me for chiding you when you neglect yourself, and inhumanly abandon all care of your health? I could talk for ten years about this wicked conduct in you, and the benefits that result from a contrary conduct. Why cannot I embrace you and enjoy your company here in the evenings? I enter this house with a heavy heart: from nine till twelve at night I am as desolate as I was at Livri, and yet I prefer this silence and repose to all the evening parties I am invited to in this part of the town: I hate going out of an evening: when I am not tormented with fears for your health, I feel your absence more. The thought of your lungs is like pinching the ear to prevent the pain of boring it from being felt: this comparison I heard from you, but the former pain soon returns when I am not checked by the other. I confess I never bear your absence so well as when I am in fear for your health, and I thank you a thousand times for removing the pincers from my ears. Madame de Vins stands in need of some equally powerful means to remove her affliction at M. de Pomponne's disgrace, by which she loses her all: I often visit her, and no misfortune shall ever drive me from the house. M. de Pomponne will easily resolve on what is to be done, and will bear his ill-fortune with dignity; he will again display the virtues of a private station, for which we so much admired him at Frene. They say he was rather remiss in his office, and made the couriers wait too long for their dispatches; he justifies himself fully; but, good heavens! do we not plainly see where the fault lies? Ah! how would poor madame du Plessis have adored him now! and how would this similarity of situation have cemented their union! Nothing in the world would have been

so fortunate for him; I have mentioned this to no one but madame de Vins; I suppose you understand me. I can answer for the justice of my opinion, which is, I dare say, your own. The whole court pities him, and have been to pay him their compliments of condolence on the occasion. You will soon see him recommence the thread of his perfections. We have talked a great deal about Providence, a doctrine he understands perfectly well. Surely there never was so worthy a minister. M. Colbert, the ambassador*, is to succeed in this office; he is a great friend of the chevalier's. Write all your thoughts to the latter: perhaps Fortune, capricious as she is, intends you should reap more advantage through his means, than from our intimate acquaintance. You will easily strike into the right road, by what I tell you. How is it possible for us to know what Providence has in store for us?

I continue my attentions to mademoiselle de Méri; the impression the misfortune of her little domestic makes on her is very extraordinary: She tells me she fancies, when any one speaks to her, they are shooting at her, as if they had an intention to kill her: this really does her as much harm as her illness: it is a circle; her anger increases her disorder, and her disorder increases her anger. The sum total is, that it is a very strange affair, and I employ all my attention to administer to her relief.

Corbinelli gives up the chevalier de Méri, with his pitiful style†, and the ridiculous critique he makes on a

* Mons. de Colbert de Croissy, brother to the comptroller-general, was then in Bavaria, in order to conclude a marriage between Monseigneur and Maria Anna Victoria of Bavaria.

† M. de Méri had known and loved madame de Maintenon from her infancy. He had brought her out into the world under the name of the Young Indian. He cultivated her friendship in all circumstances. But

wit so free, so playful, and charming, as Voiture's : those are to be pitied who do not understand him*. I would not have you depend on receiving the definition you asked of him, for he has read nothing these three months but the Code and Cujas. He is delighted with you for resolving to study medicine ; you are a prodigy in his opinion. The calm ingratitude of M. and madame Richelieu is indeed a prodigy ; you describe it very pleasantly. M. le Grand, and some others, said seriously the other day at St. Germain, that M. Richelieu had made an admirable siege : it was supposed he had been reading some book about the great Richelieu's in the civil wars ; not so, he meant Richelieu the tapestry-maker, who has made an admirable siege, that hangs in his wife's apartment.

Madame de Coulanges has been at court this fortnight ; madame de Maintenon had a cold, and would not part with her. I must tell you of a quarrel she had with the countess de Grammont† : the latter was scorching her fine complexion over the fire, making chocolate ; madame de Coulanges would have saved her the trouble : the countess bid her leave her to herself, for it was the only pleasure she had left. Madame de Coulanges answered, " Ah, ingrate !" This expression, which at any other time would have made her laugh, embarrassed and disconcerted her so highly, that she

what is singular, is, that he would have married her, and that he made her the offer of his hand at the very time that Lewis thought of making her his wife. The letters of M. de Meri, which were found in madame de Maintenon's collection, were indeed emphatic, heavy, and pedantic, and well deserved the name " pitiful style" (*chien de style*.)

* The French editors observe, justly enough, that as much may be said in regard to those who cannot find out the value of these letters of madame de Sévigné.

† Elizabeth Hamilton, lady of the bed-chamber to queen Maria Theresa of Austria.

could not get the better of it, and they have not spoken since. The abbé Tetu said, very rudely, to our neighbour, "But, madame, had she answered you, 'The pot calls the kettle black,' what would you have found to say?" "Sir," said she, "I am no pot, though she is a kettle." So here is another quarrel. *Quanto* and the sick lady are both on the high ropes; the latter is so much in favour with the fountain of all good things, that it occasions a great deal of animosity. I could tell you a thousand trifles if you were here.

Ah, my child, you tell me I have nothing to do but laugh, when I have your absence to support; I could almost find in my heart to say, "Ah, ingrate!" Do not you remember what this absence of yours has made me suffer? are not you the sensible and true occupation of my heart? You well know, and you ought to feel, what a terrible addition the fear of hearing you are indisposed, and chilled by the piercing air of Grignan, makes to this apprehension. You are unjust if you are at a loss to guess my sentiments, which are so very natural, and so full of true affection for you.

Langlade paid me a visit this morning, and informed me, very obligingly, of the honour he is to have next Sunday, of being presented and represented to the king by M. de Louvois: it is still a secret; these are very pleasing advances, which our good d'Hacqueville knew nothing of; he left you to be informed of it at your leisure by the gazette. Langlade begged me to tell you this from him, and that he wishes to be in the way of fortune, principally that he may have it in his power to serve you and M. de Grignan; it would give him real pleasure could he see any prospect, or contribute by any possible means, to be of use to you. It was he who brought about the marriage which was celebrated yesterday with

so much magnificence at M. Louvois's*. Spring was restored; nothing was to be seen but orange-trees in full blossom, and all sorts of flowers. Yet, for all this, the scale, that now preponderates so much the other way, mingled in every thing an air of melancholy, that in some degree damped the joy which would have been too strongly marked without this thin veil. Do not you admire this medley, and how far every enjoyment is from being pure, unmixed, and permanent? I imagine you have no difficulty in comprehending my meaning; it would require a long winter's night to talk over half the present revolutions.

Adieu, my beloved! I would rather madame de Cauvisson would communicate her good fortune to you, than her head. My son is at present in Lower Britany; I know not whether one of his *he's* be with mademoiselle de la Côte; but I am as much convinced as you are, there is little danger of what we once apprehended. I expect to hear from him on his arrival at Nantes. The *worthy* has got a bad cold, and so has every one except myself. I shall be bled in Lent; you have proved to me the necessity of it. The little boy will never get rid of his cough but by drinking asses' milk; it is common for the measles to be attended with a weak-

* Langlade, during the war in the king's minority, had rendered important services to the prince's party. He was then secretary only to the duke de Bouillon. He was sent by M. de la Rochefoucault to Bordeaux, to make that place declare in favour of the great Condé, then a prisoner, against the court. He succeeded. He had been secretary of the king's cabinet; and appeared sufficiently formidable, by his abilities, for cardinal de Mazarin to oblige him, in 1657, to resign his office. He long shared, with Gourville, the friendship of M. de la Rochefoucault; but madame de la Fayette, who did not like the latter, made him give the preference to Langlade in this affair. This detail is given, because it explains many passages in the following letters.

ness on the lungs, and this made me so uneasy on your account. The chevalier is almost well. La Garde does not set out till he has *turned* his affairs: but then, as soon as he can go, no earthly consideration, he says, shall hinder him. I embrace you in idea, my dearest child, and wish for nothing so much as the pleasure of embracing you in reality.

LETTER DLXXXI.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Wednesday, November 29, 1679.

You may talk to us long enough on the subject of M. Pomponne's misfortune, before you will find us in the old fashion: this event is still recent in our memory. A minister of his disposition, affability, and goodness, is so rare to be met with, that we ought to be allowed to feel his loss longer than usual. You are right in supposing I go there frequently; I could not help being affected at seeing him enter the other day with the same pleasing countenance, neither sad nor dejected. Madame de Coulanges begged I would take her there; he thanked her for remembering an unfortunate man; and soon changed the conversation to some more entertaining subject, which he rendered as agreeable as usual, without, however, the least affectation of gaiety, in so noble and natural a way, and so blended with whatever was capable of exciting our admiration, that he had no difficulty in succeeding. In short, we shall soon see M. de Pomponne as much himself as ever we knew him: this first visit affected us; he had no employment, and began to relish life, and to feel the true length of the days; for in the way he had hitherto been occupied, his life ran away like a rapid torrent,

which he had no power to stop. We told him so the last time we saw him at Pomponne, minister of state: you know it was that very evening he was disgraced, and removed from his office. I had a long conversation with madame de Vins yesterday; she will be much longer forgetting this misfortune than M. de Pomponne; I am so naturally concerned for them that I am obliged to put some restraint upon myself, lest what is real should have an air of affectation and feigned generosity; I am in great favour with them. In short, M. de Pomponne is now nothing more than the worthiest man alive: do you remember the passage in Voiture, where, speaking of the prince, he says,

Il n'avoit pas un si haut rang,
Il n'étoit que prince du sang*.

This is exactly his case. There are, however, some pleasant strokes in this disgrace. I said this put me in mind of Soyecourt, *Pray who speaks to you?* You understand all I say and all I do not say. In short, there is no help for it; we must have recourse to Providence, whose adorer and disciple M. de Pomponne is: and pray what would life be worth without this divine doctrine? we should hang ourselves twenty times a day, and even with all this we have great difficulty to keep ourselves from doing so. While waiting for your letters, my dearest child, I could not help entering into a little chat with you, on a subject which I am sure affects you. Madame de Lesdiguières has written to mother Angelica of Portroyal †, this minister's sister:

* Not in so high a rank he stood,
He was no more than prince o' th' blood.

† Mother Angelique de Saint Jeane Arnaud, abbess of Nôtre Dame de Portroyal des Champs, died January 29, 1694, aged fifty-nine years.

she showed me the answer she received from her ; I thought it so good I could not help taking a copy of it, which I send you. It is the first time I ever found a nun speak and think like a nun. I have seen many of them in great anxiety about the marriage of relations, in despair that their nieces were not yet married, vindictive, slanderous, interested, prejudiced : such as these are easily met with ; but I never met with one so truly and sincerely dead to the world. I wish you, therefore, my child, to enjoy this rarity with as much pleasure as I have. She was the beloved daughter of M. d'Andilli, of whom he told me, "I assure you, all my brothers and sisters, all my children and myself into the bargain, are mere dunces to Angelica." There never came any thing good out of that country, which had not first been corrected by her, and received her approbation : she is mistress of all languages, and every science. In short, she is a miracle ; and the more so, as she embraced a life of religion at the age of six years. I refused Brancas a copy of her letter yesterday ; he is very indignant at it ; and I said to him : " Only own that this is not so badly written for a *heretic* *." I have seen many others of her writing, and even much finer and juster than this ; which is no more than a billet written with a flowing pen. My pen is a little on the trot.

I have been at the wedding-entertainment of madame de Louvois† ; how shall I describe it to you ? Magnifi-

* The name which, as a good Molinist, M. de Brancas gave the Jansenists.

† The marriage of mademoiselle de Louvois with the son of the prince de Marsillac was an event which, in the end, had great influence. There is no doubt, that M. de Marsillac contributed to keep Louvois in favour ; that their league prevented, for a long time, the

cence, illuminations, all the nobility of France, gold and silver tissues, brocades, diamonds, stoves, flower-pots, crowds of coaches, huzzas in the streets, lighted flambeaux, horses kicking, people trod to death; in short, a whirlwind, a confusion, questions asked without any answer, compliments without knowing what was said, or to whom addressed, and legs entangled in ladies' trains: and, amidst all this hurly-burly, inquiries about your health; to which as I made no haste to answer, the inquirers were satisfied to remain in the same ignorance and indifference. *Vanity of vanities!* The young and handsome de Mouchi has the small-pox; I might here too repeat *vanity*, &c.

I received your letter of the 18th; it was written on Saturday, the very day of the disgrace of poor M. de Pomponne. Every word you have said of him pierces me to the heart; when I think of this change, and how far you were from suspecting any thing of the matter, I dread the effect this surprise may have on you. As there is no need of using precaution with madame de Vins, I shall tell her how much you were gratified by M. de Pomponne's remembrance. Alas! you mention the marriage of the dauphin, foreign affairs, ministers; I fancy the last minister must think of passing the winter at Pomponne; for though he says not, I am afraid he will be importuned to do it. He is very pious; and if this be the way to salvation, he will lose no time in hiding himself in solitude. What a misfortune for madame de Vins! and how sensibly does she feel it! Brancas and I were seized yesterday with the apprehension that Pomponne, which he used to be so immoderately fond of, and which has given rise to all the

rupture of the king with madame de Montespan, and protracted the triumph of the widow Scarron.

venial sins he has ever committed, would become insupportable to him by a very natural caprice. The time and leisure he will have there, may give him a disgust to it, and may possibly lead him to remember that this very place has contributed to his misfortune. Why may we not suppose it to be as it was to the abbé d'Effiat, who, to show his dislike to Veret, said he had married his mistress? But no, this is folly, and M. de Pomponne is wise.

You mention your friend from La Trappe: why, he was your rector at Saint Andiol. You must have had a great deal of conversation with him: nothing can be more curious than to know from the first hand what passes in this house. The dinner you describe to me is horrible; I cannot comprehend this piece of self-denial; it is a mere Judaism, and the most unwholesome thing in the world. The capuchins I saw at Pomponne enjoin it every where: I do not know whether the poor creatures know the consequence of what they are doing, but, in their opinion, nothing can be more salutary: they tell you a small quantity of spirits of salts in every thing we take, will entirely remove all nervous disorders. I fancy Villebrune * must have experienced the virtue of this present from heaven. In short, I am far from being edified by this wretched penance. You always take care to speak so favourably of the extraordinary attention you pay to your health, that I am utterly at a loss what to say to you: God grant you may continue in a conduct of which you have already begun to feel the good effects! had you but made use of a portion of it when you were here, you would considerably have abridged our discourse on this subject. What

* An ex-Capuchin that dabbled in physic. See Letter, December 15, 1675.

you tell me of madame de Coulanges, and of her being angry with La Fare, who she said had deceived her, would be admirable to show her, accompanied with your great desire to hear from her, if you had not so freely given your opinion of madame de Villars's regard for her. This circumstance obliges me to conceal the other from her, which would have rejoiced her exceedingly. I beg you would once more resume your discourse about her, for she is always pressing me to remember her to you in the most earnest manner. She will needs see the passages where you speak of your health; she interests herself in it, as well as in what concerns her little friend: all this kindness must be repaid. I know not how you will like to hear that La Trousse is not yet come back; I am either greatly deceived in him, or else he must have been guilty of some heinous crime against love. Good God, what madness there is in the world! I often fancy I see strait-waistcoats and chains upon my friends, and, perhaps, they fancy the same of me.

I think I shall weep on seeing your courier charged with dispatches to M. de Pomponne. I met some wag-gons loaded with his furniture the other day, which they were bringing from St. Germain; this created a new emotion: in short, my child, you may easily guess how difficult it is for me to reconcile myself to this revolution. I do not like to lose my letters; yours are particularly dear to me. You must not be so anxious about mine, for I assure you I never enjoyed better health in my life: I shall take medicine shortly, by way of preparative to the waters, out of mere obedience and regard to you. You pay Corbinelli a very just compliment; it is impossible to answer him better than in his own words. He would have much to say, to comment upon the small dash you made; and if it should

so happen that this should ever come upon the carpet again, he is convinced you would erase it. Be it as it may, we are now pretty sure of the time to come, both in regard to the loss we have sustained, and to the link of union whom you both love so much, and who knows better than any one the justice you do him, in restoring him to that place in your friendship he formerly enjoyed. It would be of no small advantage to you if you knew all the good we often say of you together.

Farewell, my beloved and amiable child! may God protect you! What a miracle it is that you have not caught the measles! it is a dreadful disease for the lungs; your son must take milk. Madame de Mêmes is arrived. I ran to see her yesterday; she tells me wonders of you, of your husband, your children, your house, your entertainment, your music, your fine air, and in some sort of your health; but it was because she knew it would please me. Take care you do not write answers as long as my letters: consider, my child, that I have no correspondent but you. My son is in Lower Britany, at Tonquedec's, and is coming home. I embrace all your circle of friends, and Paulina; madame de Mêmes tells me she is extremely pretty. M. de Mêmes is not yet arrived.

LETTER DLXXXII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Friday, December 1, 1679.

Yrs, my child, I do indeed make you a present of that pretty writing-desk; it has always been my intention. I only waited to know whether you liked it, to inform you it was yours. The abbé swears he was always of this opinion, so that if he has put it down by mistake

in the little bill of disbursements he sent you, he begs you will blot it out. It will henceforth be my mother's desk, and is sufficiently pretty to make me wish you to name it so; and, particularly, as you tell me you will never convert it into a dagger.

I do not like you should be angry with yourself for having acquainted me with your son's illness; how was it possible to conceal a thing of this nature? I should hate this extreme dissimulation, nay, the very pen would drop from my hand; and then, what should we talk of, pray, if not of what we are most anxious about? For my own part, I know myself incapable of it, and I honour so highly the free communication of sentiments, that it would never enter my head to be scrupulous in giving such a subject of uneasiness to a person I loved, at the expense of the consolation I should receive in imparting my sorrows to him. This is my way, this is *my mother's* humour, and I entreat you to let it be *my daughter's* humour likewise, and that you would never give yourself the smallest uneasiness about the pain you may cause me, since you make me equally a partaker in your joy; is not this the proper feeling of friendship? Ah, indeed it is! and I know no other.

M. and madame de Pomponne, and madame de Vins, are gone to Pomponne. Good heavens! how I dread the effect the sight of that place will have on them! there they will see six boys at once, and the house, where they will in future have but too much leisure on their hands: I cannot help thinking all this must occasion them very melancholy reflections. I have sent away your letters, and you did extremely well to write them. The little wife * is at the hotel de la Rochefoucault, as

* Mademoiselle de Louvois, newly married to M. de la Rocheguyon.

gay and pert as ever. If she is not polished a little by the society of so many excellent polishers of both sexes, I shall conclude education to be a mere fable of La Fontaine's.

What say you to the opportunity of a handsome apartment in this street, which mademoiselle de Meri is likely to lose by her indecision? M. de la Troune, who is just arrived, and the chevalier, have both seen it. She wants a wardrobe, which I promise she shall have; another room for a servant, which I also undertake to supply; though I think she ought to begin by taking possession: she wanted to be in this part of the town; she wanted to stand at a lower rent than she formerly did; this is considerably cheaper; to be out of the way of noise, there is none to be heard; to be near a church, there is one at the door; good air and a good opening, every thing answers, except one unlucky circumstance, that it suits too well, and has not half difficulties and inconveniences enough. For my part, I agree with her, there is a certain pleasure in making complaints, nay, even a greater than we imagine.

Brancas came to take me with him to sup at madame de Coulanges'; her supper was small, and her company select, for there were only four: I suffer myself sometimes to be seduced by Brancas, without any good reason, like madame de Guitaut's woman. I am now taking the waters; I have taken some pills on account of the cold. Pray omit no opportunity of informing me of the state of your health, for my whole thoughts are occupied with that subject; and all I wish for is to see you fatter and stronger than when you left me.

When I reflect that life, and especially my own, is passed in absence and inquietude, I pity all who possess the same feelings as I do. Madame de la Fayette

is fully persuaded she would have fulfilled all the demands of our friendship, had she given you back to me, by a suitable attachment to M. de Grignan: she is touched with this pleasure, and finding herself in favour, all she wishes for is a proper opportunity; she is waiting in hopes it will offer, and we have a right to expect some such good fortune, from the natural inconsistency of human affairs. Langlade meets her half-way in this; he has paid his humble respects to the king; this is literally true, for the king said not a word to him, but smiled graciously. I am going to dine with the marchioness d'Huxelles; she informs me, that M. de Piles entreats me to do so; M. de la Rochefoucault and Treville are to be there; this is called the select company. Madame de Lavardin is very ill of a cold, and keeps her bed, with madame de Mouci at her pillow; the marchioness and I are on each side, but ten degrees lower. Adieu, my lovely child! preserve to me the dearest person in the world; you know I speak the truth. I have heard no news; the chevalier will tell you if there is any; he is never without some, true or false.

LETTER DLXXXIII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Wednesday, Dec. 6, 1679.

YOUR messenger, my child, arrived on Saturday at three: we are always agitated on the receipt of news. The packets addressed to "M. de Pomponne, minister and secretary of state," affected me sadly. He is now at Pomponne, in absolute solitude, and with as much time on his hands as we have at Livri. Messieurs de Grignan and I thought it would be civil to send him the

packets addressed to himself, that he might take out his own letters, and send back the others, which was accordingly done; at the same time the courier (*Rencontre*) crossed directly over to Saint Germain, and delivered to *Parère* what *M. de Pomponne* sent back. But the real courier, with the remaining letters, was conducted by the *abbé de Grignan* to all the places he ought to call at: he will inform you in what manner he has been received. For my own part, I offer my service in soliciting the direction, which is all the service I can render your courier, whom we shall send back as quickly as possible. *M. de Pomponne*, and *madame de Vins*, have written to me very kindly, in answer to my letter to them; they tell me they must have recourse to the repose of the country in the beginning, and that it will suit their present situation much better than Paris: I can easily enter into their feelings; when I am unhappy, nothing will do for me but *Livri*. In fact, I shall hardly ever be able to reconcile myself to this minister's downfall, as I thought his situation much more to be depended on than that of the other ministers, because he was not a favourite. They say it is upwards of two years since he began to lose ground in the king's favour, that he was headstrong in the council, that he went often to *Pomponne*, that this rendered him less punctual and exact in his department, and that, in the last place, this Bavarian courier, who arrived on Thursday evening, and of whom he gave no account till Saturday at five in the afternoon, completed his disgrace. He excuses himself for this fault, by saying, it took up all this time to decipher the dispatches; and that, had the courier not shown himself, his majesty would have been under no uneasiness about the matter; but he had been with *M. Colbert*, and had delivered his letters; so that the

news took air before the king had his: all this was ordered by the over-ruling designs of Providence; M. de Pomponne considers it in this light, and it is the only consideration that can possibly alleviate his sufferings.

Nothing happens amiss to the fortunate: every thing has contributed to make mademoiselle de Vauvineux, princess de Guéméné: *primo amor del cor mio**, is the reason her husband gives every body. This affair has been carried on with so much secrecy, that no one heard of it till Sunday morning. They had been married at midnight at St. Paul's. The king was chief confidant in this affair; he signed the marriage-contract, and, having no longer the same reasons he had two years ago, has changed his mind, and approved the alliance. There were twenty-nine persons necessarily obliged to be in the secret, who it seems could hold their tongues. The new-married couple were not to be seen next day; and on Tuesday, which was yesterday, the mother and daughter set out for Rochefort to visit the grandmother, who had sent every thing necessary on her part, and who gave them an excellent reception. Here was no fuss about fine clothes, nor wedding-bed; it was only a good princess de Guéméné, who is certainly the first lady in France, and will lead a very happy life with the man, to whom she thinks, with reason, that she is under very great obligations. ~~It is~~ a strange man, and a man who has not learned like you to overcome the enemy of La Trappe; who has eaten salt all his life, and cannot live without it: three months of widowhood seemed to him three ages: speculation has not injured his spirits, all is sacrificed to economy, and his affection is founded on this immovable basis. The whole family of the Luynes are enraged; "What, only three months after our daughter's death! he who was

* i. e. My heart's first love.

every day bathed in tears (you see what he wept for), without saying a word to us! how scandalous!" I have maintained that M. de Guéméné has acted very wisely, as well as the ladies; the one in having followed a very honourable and rational inclination, and the others in not having sounded a trumpet upon the occasion; since the king himself was their confidant, of what use would it have been? I was really pleased with the whole affair; I could easily guess madame de Vauvineux's joy, not only at the marriage, which is wonderfully advantageous, but on account of the manner in which it has been conducted, which has prevented a great deal of gossiping and a great deal of disgust, and an expense of a hundred thousand livres into the bargain, which is, in my opinion, no trifling consideration. Am I not right then, my child, in saying that nothing happens amiss to the fortunate? it is a maxim of the Gospel, which you know we must believe.

I was really very uneasy about your affairs in Provence. The handsome abbé was obliged to introduce your messenger, whose dispatches were received very graciously. The abbé very properly took notice how desirous the states of Provence were to give the coadjutor a place in their assembly; but that they refused to hear of it till they were sure of his majesty's approbation, and of his being satisfied he could do him some essential service in that province. M. Colbert listened to the proposal very obligingly; said he would take occasion to mention it to the king, and that he did not doubt, &c. In short, the handsome abbé gave every thing an admirable turn. Parero has promised to procure the courier the allowance, that is, five hundred crowns, as last year. The abbé has a great deal more influence in all this than I; so you see plainly to what a pass all the affairs you were pleased to employ me in have

come to, and the fine use I have made of all my boasted eagerness to serve you. I am precisely in the case of the fly ; that is, I perch myself on the coachman's nose, push the wheel, buz, and play five hundred antic tricks, and then say, *What a dust I raise!* I am going to see Mess. de Grignan, I hear what they tell me, I approve it, and advise what has been resolved on : in short, my dear child, if you love me only on account of your interest, I am undone. I have an idea that my son is undone as well as I ; your letter waits for him here ; he is no longer wandering in the woods at the Rocks, he is now in Lower Britany ; M. de Harouis expects him at Nantz, with no small impatience, for he has affairs here.

We read a thousand different accounts of the queen of Spain. She is entirely devoted to Spain, and has kept no more than the four French ladies who are of her bed-chamber. The king surprised her as she was putting on her head-dress, he opened the door with his own hands : she would have fallen on her knees and kissed his hand ; he prevented her, and kissed hers, so that both were on their knees together. They were married without any ceremony, and then retired to chat. The queen understands Spanish ; she was dressed in the Spanish costume. They arrived in Burgos, went to bed at eight o'clock, and lay the next morning till ten. The queen has written to Monsieur from thence, and tells him she is happy and satisfied ; that she found the king much more agreeable than he had been represented to her. The king is very much in love with her ; the queen has been well advised, and has conducted herself admirably ; guess by whom she was advised ; by madame de Grancey, for madame de Clembault was motionless, having added a large dose of the Spanish gravity to her Stoic philosophy. Madame

de Grancey has made herself the most useful, and accordingly has received great praises, and very valuable presents. The king allows her a pension of six thousand livres, which she will receive from the city of Brussels; she has had a present of ten thousand crowns for a piece of intelligence which Los Balvarez gave her, and jewels to the amount of ten thousand crowns. She writes, that the soul of madame de Fienes * has transmigrated into her; that she is receiving presents from all quarters, and that she shall become so much accustomed to this, that she shall be out of conceit with France, if she is not treated in the same manner as she has been in Spain. All the ladies are returning from thence; they have saved madame de Clerambault the trouble of one part of the journey, by requiring her absolutely to stop at Poitiers, where she had been taken. This is as mortifying a circumstance as could possibly have happened to her; and she stands in great need of her contempt of mankind, to support this disgrace. Madame d'Effiat † has been declared governess; she is sent back with her husband. Write then, my dear count, she is your friend; you are under a sort of obligation to compliment her on this occasion.

* The covetousness of this woman was insatiable, and she owned it with singular impudence. She said (mademoiselle de Montpensier relates the circumstance), "How enviable is the situation of servants! the custom of giving them veils is fixed; I should like to be one, that I might also be in the way of receiving them." She was driven from court in 1658. During the king's illness she had expressed her joy, and her hope of governing Monsieur, over whom she had obtained influence by intrigue of not the most delicate nature. But she was recalled. It appears in the letters of Madame, that she found her perfectly established there, and snarling at every one with impunity.

† Marie-Anne Olivier de Leuville, marchioness d'Effiat, was declared governess to the children of Monsieur, on the dismissal of the lady of marshal Clerambault.

The little La Mouchi has not had the small pox; it was the purple fever of which Sanguin cured her. I am afraid the civilities you will be obliged to pay at Aix will fatigue you. Go and take a little repose in your closet; solitude is now and then very necessary for you: the mesdemoiselles de Grignan will do the honours for you. Paulina has written me a charming letter. We are delighted with her style: it had such an effect as to cause madame de la Fayette to forget a fit of the vapours, which had almost suffocated her. Pray, how do you manage Roquesante, and all your ladies who are my acquaintances? I am perfectly happy with your *absolutely* praying me to give you the writing-desk; I do not think these two words were ever put together before; really, my child, you have rejoiced me by asking for it so importunately; I shall not tell you now, whether it is my intention to give it you or not. But if I had wished not to part with it, I should have been obliged to have accepted your terms. I had therefore better do it at once with a good grace.

LETTER DLXXXIV.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Friday, December 8, 1679.

It is really cruel, my beloved child, to be so far from those we love. It is impossible, let us form what resolution we please, not to be alarmed in some measure at the irregularity of the post. I had no letter from you on Wednesday; I was under no sort of uneasiness on the Sunday, as the courier had arrived. I sent to Messieurs de Grignan, who, like me, had received no letters. I went again the next day, which was yesterday; at last there came a letter from the archbishop, which

convinced me you were not more indisposed than usual. I went to the post-office to learn what news I could from Aix, as these gentlemen's correspondence is rather more extensive than ours; but I learned from madame Rouillé, that her husband *, in his letter of the 29th, made no mention of you; but said a great deal about M. de Pom-pomme's disgrace, of which M. de Grignan had informed him. I expect therefore your letters of Sunday; and hope I shall receive two. I never doubted your writing to me unless you were ill: this thought alone, though without any foundation, is the cause of great uneasiness, as it is a consequence of your weak state of health; for even if you were well, I could not bear, without alarm, the sad irregularities of the post: in short, what a folly it is to bring madame Rouillé's packet from Aix, and leave mine behind! I wrote you a long letter on Wednesday; should it be lost, you will not understand a word of this. For instance, when I say the young princess de Guéméné will be in great state at the hôtel de Guéméné, you will not be able to guess what this means; but supposing you knew mademoiselle de Vauvineux's marriage, I would tell you, that, in order that nothing may be wanting to complete her triumph, she will receive visits there for four days following. I shall go to-morrow with madame de Coulanges, for I always make what I call visits, either with her or her sister. We were yesterday, count, with your friends de Leuville and d'Effiat; they are receiving compliments on the reconciliation and the governorship †. This d'Effiat was ill in a cold, and could not be seen; but it was all one, for young Leuville did the honour. I paid your compliments to them by antici-

* Intendant of Provence.

† See the Letter of December 6.

pation, and yours too, my dear child. It is astonishing that madame d'Effiat should be made governess to any thing; but it is all well, madame de Clerambault will receive her packet at Poitiers; that is to say, on the very spot where she received orders to come to the royal palace; this is the way of the world. Did not I acquaint you with madame de Grancey's good fortune, and of her being returned loaded with presents? She would have set all Spain on fire, had she staid the winter, as they said she was to do. She has written, that the covetous spirit of madame de Fiennes had happily transmigrated into her body, and that she was receiving favours at all hands. The Bavarian courier is expected with impatience at court, and the moments are counted. This brings to my memory the other courier, who completed the measure of misfortune to our poor friend; had it not been for this last adventure, he might have been once more restored to his office: but Providence had ordered it otherwise. I told you I had sent all the large packets to Pomponne, with that for madame de Vins: what was for Saint Germain has been sent there.

I have a great desire to know how the poor little Adhemar does. I shall try presently to pluck up courage enough to write to him; if once I begin to postpone, there is no end of procrastination. What can I say more to you? I do not find there is any news; it will be known who the officers of the dauphiness are to be, by the return of the courier. I dread the effect of that tempest at Aix upon your health; it is really terrible; I well remember it. All these goings and comings, that were nothing to you formerly, are now become the most tiresome affairs. The chevalier de Baous is here. He is always telling me you are in perfect health, that you are handsomer than ever, and so

gay ! This is too much, chevalier ; a little less exaggeration, with a greater share of probability ; a few more particulars, more attention, would have given me much higher satisfaction : there are some eyes that let nothing escape them ; and as for those who see nothing, I am quite out of patience with them. I have often said, we are always in perfect health to those who are absolutely indifferent whether it is so or not. Saint Laurent tells me too that you are in perfect health ; good heavens ! one line from Montgobert, who both sees and understands, would give me more pleasure than all these perfection folks. Madame de Coulanges talked with Fagon above an hour the other day at madame de Maintenon's ; they mentioned you : Fagon says, your greatest attention must be directed to your diet ; that a proper regimen was your cure ; that this was his only dependence ; that it sweetened the blood, repaired what was lost by dissipation, restored the lungs, and renewed lost strength ; and that it was a great mistake to fancy the cause of uneasiness six or eight hours after meals to be indigestion ; that it was in fact nothing more than a flatulency which commonly succeeds, and that were we to take a little soup, or any thing hot, before what we call our dinner, we should not feel the least inconvenience, but on the contrary much good from it ; that this was one of your greatest mistakes. Madame de Coulanges listened to, and remembered, this long lecture, and would needs have it sent to you ; I took this employment on myself, that I might at the same time entreat you earnestly to consider it well, and to make the experiment whether the observation be true ; and so hold the preservation of your health, as the only business worthy your care, before all the other considerations you denominate duties. Had not poor madame de la Fayette taken this course, she would have

been in her grave long ago; in short, it is entirely owing to this thought, which Providence put into her head, that she has been able to prolong her wearisome life; for, to tell you the truth, she labours under a complication of disorders.

I have this moment received your packet of the 20th, by a circuitous conveyance, so that all the beginning of my letter is ridiculous, and useless. This then is that dear packet; you did extremely well in disguising the affair, and to let your grief subside a little. I do not at all wonder at your surprise, any more than at your grief on the occasion. What I felt at first, I feel daily. You will say a great deal to me before I find you too full of this event; it will not be so soon forgotten by many people we know; for, though the torrent hurries along, like the Durance, when the devil possesses it, it does not sweep all away with it. Your reflections are so affectionate, so just, so wise, and so good, that they deserve the admiration of some one whose favourable opinion is of more value than mine.

You are right; the last fault was by no means the sole cause of the misfortune, though it contributed, I believe, to hasten the resolution they had no thoughts of adopting till then. A certain person (M. de Louvois) had, for a year past, made strong efforts in hopes of catching the prey: but some beat the bush, whilst others (Colbert) catch the birds; this has been no small affliction, and has entirely disturbed the internal joy of the feast*; do you understand me? It is a checkmate, when the game was thought in a fair way to be won, and the pieces were about to be collected. This is the last drop of water the glass had to spill: the reason that makes us discharge a porter, when he ne-

* See Letters of November 24 and 29.

glects to give us a note we expected with impatience, has made some folks tumble headlong from the pinnacle of their greatness; a good use has been made of the occasion. No one thinks Arnaud has had the smallest share in it. Perhaps he was playing at stakes. A certain gentleman told me the other day, that his signature to any thing is considered as a crime; I said, "Yes, it is a crime in *them*, to sign, and not to sign*." I have not heard a word of that insolent paper you mention. I fancy they do not commonly distrust the discretion of those with whom they intrust their secrets; nothing can exceed their prudence, virtue, courage, or resignation. I believe M. de Pomponne in his solitude, where he will remain some days longer, will communicate all his perfections to his whole family. I have taken care to have your packet delivered to his sister-in-law†, by sending all packets as I have informed you. I am going to send those I have just received, after them. Adieu, my beloved child. You are too good to take any notice of the pain I suffer, in finding myself so little able to be of service to you; every attempt I make of this sort gives me only new matter of chagrin: yet for all this, you will not cease to love me; you assure me you will not, and I can easily believe you. I should think exactly as you do, were I in your place; this is the surest criterion.

* The Jansenists would not sign the formulary.

† Madame de Vins.

LETTER DLXXXV.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Wednesday, Dec. 12, 1679.

SAY what you will, my dearest child, you must have seen, by the whole tenor of my letters, how naturally I fall into this subject, and how difficult it would be for me to keep silence, since I often think of it; and if I am one degree lower in the warmth of my friendship for the sister-in-law than you, I am as much higher with regard to the brother-in-law. Old dates, long acquaintance, and connexions, discover to me, on the present occasion, that I am more strongly attached than I believed I was. They are still in the country; I enclose you the two notes they sent me, when they returned your packets. You see their present situation: can any thing exceed the tenderness or the rectitude of their sentiments? My esteem and friendship for them have become great, in proportion to their misfortunes; I am persuaded our misfortune has had its share in their disgrace. Cast your eyes around upon all our friends, and you will see your reflections justified. A great deal more might be said on the subject. I think I have already convinced you, that trifles had long been magnified into things of consequence. This had formed a disposition, which had been continually fomented, with a view to take advantage of it on a proper occasion; and the last fault provoked beyond all patience, and gave the finishing blow to the whole: others immediately made use of the occasion to promote their own interest, and the whole was resolved on in a moment. The fact is this; the courier, who had been expected with impatience, arrived on the Thursday evening; M.

de Pomponne gave the whole of the dispatches to be deciphered, which was an affair of twenty-four hours. He charged the courier not to appear till it was done ; but as he belonged to those who had dispatched him, he went and delivered his letters for the family ; the brother told his majesty what had been written him from Bavaria : immediately the impatience to know what was deciphering, began to work ; it was expected on Thursday evening, Friday all day, and Saturday till five in the evening. It is true, when M. de Pomponne arrived, the whole was done ; even the following morning, the affair was not desperate ; he was at his country-house, persuaded that nothing would be suspected ; he there received the deciphered dispatches on the Friday evening, and he set out on the Saturday morning at ten, but arrived too late. This then is the reason, the pretext, or what you please to call it : for it is certain, that if it had not been on this account, it would have been on some other, and that in the end this good fortune, which, in fact, held but by a hair, would have been overturned. But what is really laughable in this affair is, that the person who had planned it all (Louvois), has reaped no sort of advantage from it, but has been mortified at it beyond imagination. Our friend asked, whether he might not be permitted to see his majesty, and justify his conduct to his master : he was told for answer, it was not convenient at that time ; that his fidelity was well known, that it was in no way attacked, and that some time hence he might, possibly have that satisfaction. He wrote, expressing his surprise and mortification at having had the misfortune to offend ; mentioned his eight children unprovided for ; and here the affair rested : I could say a great deal on the subject ; but this is enough, and perhaps too much, especially at such a distance.

So you have considered a little the country of these two Burgundy counsellors, *it is my mother's country*; I have a notion that M. de Berbisi's acquaintance has rather the best of it. But M. de Condom, who loves you, and whom I honour extremely, immediately comes into my head; so that in good sooth I know not what to say to you; *do as you like*. This is what I have told my son every time he came to ask my leave to visit Lower Britany; I tolerated what I could not prevent. He has been at Tonquedec's for a month. I know not where to write to him, he does not wish to hear from me; would you have acted thus? He makes M. d'Harouïs perfectly in a rage with him, for he is waiting for him at Nantes, in order to return with him to Paris: I admire them both; one for his goodness and patience, and the other for his barbarity. I know not whether the dear or indifferent object be with him; it will be all unravelled, I fancy, before the end of the year. Ah! here comes a letter from him; he is now at Nantes, and after having made M. d'Harouïs wait for him so long, has suffered him to go, without being able to follow him, on account of some business he has at Buron; I have doubts about this conduct. He says a great deal of his dear pigeon, and says he loves her more than all his mistresses. I shall not take upon me to say whether you ought to be satisfied with this: be satisfied at least with madame de la Fayette, who has just been mentioning you in the most affectionate terms. We shall soon know, who have been named by the dauphiness; they will be declared on the arrival of the courier who is expected. There are persons who say that madame de Maintenon will be placed in a situation that will surprise the whole world; this will not be on *Quanto's* account, for it is the most inveterate hatred that has

happened in our days : she really stands in need of no one but her own good sense.

You make me pity you, in asking oranges from our quarter of the globe ; it is a strange alteration, to see them frozen in Provence ; the sun, however, is not so : you mention the mildness of May, which gives me some consolation. I have seen mademoiselle de Meri ; she made an effort to come to see this pretty apartment : she does not like it ; what a pity ! She still continues in a very languishing state ; her uneasiness about her little household affairs is really without end ; I could never have supposed that such a trifle would have occupied her mind so entirely. M. and madame de Mêmes are going from hence ; they have begun to talk of you and Grignan afresh, with great prepossessions of your charming house, and fine titles ; Paulina and her charms, your music, your terraces, your politeness ; and conclude with repeated and earnest entreaties, that I would assure you both of their most humble service, respect, friendship, and gratitude ; in short, I never saw persons so hearty in their good wishes to you : I undertook to perform all this, and I have acquitted myself of the office. I have this moment been told that M. de Richelieu is to be knight of honour, his wife lady of honour to the dauphiness ; madame de Crequi, lady of honour to the queen : I think this is very likely to be true ; the statement will, in that case, be confirmed in a few days.

I wish I could describe to you a screen which cardinal d'Etrées has presented to madame de Savoy*, in the

* Marie-Jeanne Baptiste de Savoye Nemours, mother to Victor-Amadeus-Francis, duke of Savoy, afterwards king of Sicily in 1713, and king of Sardinia in 1720.

manner of a *sapate**, and of which madame de la Fayette has had the whole management, it being entirely of her invention. You must know, madame de Savoy wishes for nothing so much as the accomplishment of her son's marriage with the infanta of Portugal; this is the gospel of the day. This screen is of the middle size; on one side, which is a painting, is a very striking likeness of the princess in miniature, about the size of the hand, accompanied by the Virtues, distinguished by their proper characters; this makes a beautiful and tasteful group. Opposite the princess is a striking likeness of the young prince, handsome as an angel, surrounded by the Loves and Infantine Sports: this is another very pleasing little group. The princess, with her right hand, shows her son the sea, and the city of Lisbon. Glory and Fame hover over his head, ready to crown him. Under the prince's feet are these words from Virgil:

Matre deâ monstrante viam†.

Nothing was ever better imagined. The other side of the screen is beautifully embroidered with gold and silver. The stand is richly gilt, and finely wrought. The nails which fasten the lace are diamonds, as is the pivot which supports it. On the top of the stand is the crown of Savoy, consisting entirely of diamonds. In short, this present is so superb, and the subject so pleasing, as to eclipse all the *sapates* that ever were seen. This pretty screen is to be discovered standing

* This is the name of a sort of festival invented by the Spaniards, who celebrated it yearly on the 5th of December. It was afterwards introduced into Savoy, by Catherine of Spain, wife of Charles-Emmanuel, duke of Savoy, and has been kept up there ever since. This usage consists in making presents, but so as to conceal from whom they come.

† The goddess-mother shewing the way.

before the fire, that the princess, seeing it immediately on coming out of her closet, may have all the pleasure of a surprise. Ah! my child, this is the sort of present I should like to make. I know not whether my description has done it justice.

LETTER DLXXXVI.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Monday, December 25, 1679.

SEPARATION, attended with all that accompanies ours, is terrible. I often spare you the trouble of reading the sorrows I endure on your account, but then it is sometimes absolutely impossible for me to dissemble them: I must needs buzz them in your ears like *the fly*. I wish it may not prove ineffectual, and that your regard for me may produce such an effect as to rouse your attention with respect to your health, which you ought certainly to prefer to all earthly considerations; as I shall otherwise no longer preserve to you a person who loves you more than the whole world, you must begin by the care of her who is dearest to me. Why cannot I send you some of my excellent health? I shall not say a word more of this, since it shows itself sufficiently.

I have spoken of your affairs to the Grignans; it is there I certainly act the part of the *fly*; they are entirely against the Toulon affair. M. de la Garde, and the chevalier, are both of opinion, that it is ridiculous to think of it, unless you wish to quarrel with M. de Vendome. The chevalier is gone to Saint Germain; he is the person who is to take upon him the care of your courier's business; the handsome abbé had before charged himself with it; there are, in fact, other things

besides this. There are some bishoprics going to be given away : we must pursue this trifle a little better, ere we can hope to succeed in it : this became M. Colbert's business, and, of course, came to nothing. It is true, I buzzed a little about it, and perched myself so nicely on the chevalier's nose, that I persuade myself he will bring it me from Saint Germain ; I will do the rest : his wicked rheumatism prevented him from setting about it sooner. I cannot help wondering how it is, that in all your affairs, great or little, you are so unfortunate. M. de St. Geran is still more so than you ; he is ruined to all intents and purposes ; he is so astonished, that he has not a word to say, while every one is pleased at his disappointment. He has had several severe strokes given him in presence of the king ; the first was from the count de Grammont, you know his tone*. "Sire," said he, some little time since, "I ask your majesty for the place of first equerry to the dauphiness : possibly your majesty may consider me unworthy this employ ; but when I see the huge St. Geran pretending to it, I hope, sire, it will be no presumption to name to your majesty, the poor count de Grammont." This has given rise to new thoughts and new reflections. There have been some still more severe. The same count found St. Geran on his knees the other day at chapel, where he seemed not to observe the court, which was there at the same time. "Friend," said he, clapping him on the shoulder, "you must comfort yourself with Jesus Christ." The king could hardly refrain from bursting out into a laugh. Yesterday he said to the dauphin, in presence of the king, "Monseigneur, I entreat you to tell the dauphiness, it is not

* It must be remembered that he was a Gascon, and had preserved his accent. He is the hero of the well-written Memoirs by his brother-in-law Hamilton.

my fault that I am not of her household ; I call his majesty to witness." They are to set out towards the end of January to the espousal of the princess. Are you not perfectly satisfied with the persons who have been chosen ? M. de Richelieu and marshal de Bellefond will acquit themselves worthily of their office, without even making any new places amongst the blue ribbons, when vacancies shall happen, which there would otherwise certainly have been. They have allowed madame de Soubise the same appointments and the same rank as to a lady of honour, without the title of one ; that is to say, so much money in pocket : this, with the two thousand crowns which she is to retain, makes a yearly income of twenty-one thousand livres. On some person's complimenting M. de Soubise on the occasion, " Alas ! this is my wife's doing, and I ought not to receive the compliments." And madame de Rochefort, " See what it is to be attached to the queen." The world is still very charitable, as it always has been. The duchess de Sully is returning from Picardy ; she means to pass the winter at Sully, till madame de Vernueil returns. Madame de Lesdiguières deserves to be remembered by you ; she always asks after you in the kindest manner, and begs me to tell you a thousand things from her. I have been at the midnight mass at the Bloes, where it was intolerably hot : the afternoon sermon was extremely cold ; it was as perverse a Jesuit, as I am perverse when I dine with the little society.

LETTER DLXXXVII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Wednesday, Dec. 27, 1679.

THE whole family of the Pomponnes are come here to pass the holidays. Madame de Vins was the first that came; I had seen her twice. I saw M. de Pomponne, I mean he who lives at Frene; or if you will, the worthiest man in the world, and nothing more: as being minister made no change in him, I can assure you his fall has made no more change than that did. He is an excellent companion; he mentioned you to me with great kindness, and appeared much concerned at your last letter: this affair is not so soon discussed; I, on my side, told him in what terms you had written to me on the subject of his misfortune. Madame de Vins melted into tears when she spoke of the goodness of your heart. There was not a dry eye among us. They returned to Pomponne next day, having as yet come to no settled resolution: they have not yet received their dismissal, and of course have had no money. He has asked, whether he might not be permitted to see the king; but has had no answer. I cannot see how he can be better than at Pomponne, inspiring his children with true and solid virtue, and conversing with the solitary beings who are there. Madame de Vins has done nothing but pay visits the whole day; she wants both you and madame de Villars; she reckons me somebody, and I am happy in being at leisure to do her these trifling favours. We have been to see the mesdames de Richelieu, de Chaulnes, de Crequi, de Rochefort; and afterwards M. de Pomponne, who appears every day more and more amiable, and is possessed of the sound-

est understanding of any man I have ever met with. Madame de Vins is going to take an excursion to Saint Germain : what grief, to behold that country, once her own, but where she is now an utter stranger ! How I dread this journey for her ! she will afterwards return to the afflicted family, whose sole joy and consolation she is.

The court is overjoyed at the marriage of the prince de Conti with mademoiselle de Blois*. They are true romantic lovers : the king was highly amused with the ardour of their passion ; he spoke to his daughter very affectionately, and assured her he loved her so much, that he could not think of parting with her ; the little creature was so moved and overjoyed at it, that she wept. The king told her, he saw it was from aversion to the husband he had chosen for her, that she wept : she burst into tears a second time, her little heart was unable to contain her joy. The king related this little scene, and every body was charmed with it. As for the prince de Conti, he was transported with the thoughts of it ; he knew neither what he did, nor what he said ; he ran against all he met in his way, as he was going to visit mademoiselle de Blois. Madame Colbert wished to prevent him from seeing her till the evening ; he burst open the doors, threw himself at her feet, and kissed her hand : she very unceremoniously embraced him, and then another burst of tears. This dear little princess is so affectionate and so pretty, that we almost want to eat her. The count de Grammont, amongst others, paid his compliments to the prince de Conti ; " Sir," said he, " I am heartily glad of your marriage : take my advice ; keep well with your father-in-law, do not disoblige him, do not fall out with him on any trifling occasion ; keep well with the family, and I can answer

* Daughter of Lewis XIV. and madame de la Vallière.

for it, you will have no reason to repent the alliance." The king was diverted at this; and in marrying his daughter, compliments the prince, the duke and duchess, like any other person. He has solicited the friendship of the last for mademoiselle de Blois; adding, that she will be too happy in being often in her company, and in having an opportunity of copying so excellent an example. He delights in teasing the prince de Conti, who is given to understand the marriage-articles are not without difficulties, and that the marriage must be put off till the next winter: on hearing this, the amorous prince swoons away; the princess at the same time vowing she will have no other husband. The catastrophe is somewhat allied to Don Quixote, and, in reality, there never was a finer piece of romance in the world. You may guess what pleasure this match, as well as the manner in which it has been concluded, creates in a certain place*.

The portrait of the dauphiness is arrived; she appears to be but moderately handsome; they praise her understanding, her teeth, her stature, but these perfections gave de Troy† no opportunity of displaying his talents. I have thanked M. de la Rochefoucault in your name. He has a very flattering regard both for you and your husband. Madame de la Fayette sends her kindest compliments to you; so do the cardinals de Bouillon and d'Etrées, and the widows; I see on all sides nothing else but persons requesting me to remember them to you.

Madame d'Effiat has neither spoiled any thing, nor is she spoiled herself. Marshal Clerambault's lady is here; she supports disgrace like a true Stoic, and has

* Madame de Montespan beheld, no doubt, with grief, the king's affection for a daughter of madame de la Vallière.

† An eminent portrait-painter.

no thoughts of opening a vein on the occasion* : but she lost a thousand louis-d'ors to the little d'Harouïs, the evening she arrived ; this is sufficient to throw a light upon what happened to her at the Palais Royal.

LETTER DLXXXVIII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Friday, December 29, 1679.

FIGURE to yourself, my dear good child, that I am on my knees before you, and that I conjure you in tears, by all the love you ever bore me, and by mine for you, never again to write me a longer letter than your last : I request it from the bottom of my heart so fervently, that it is impossible I should fail to convince you. What ! have I to reproach myself as the cause of your being weak and exhausted ? Alas, my dear child ! this thought alone does me sufficient injury, without adding that of having killed you with my own hand. As things are thus, let me, I entreat you, no longer be numbered among your duties ; I have long been alarmed at the volumes you write me, and frightened to death at the apprehension of what may have happened to you. In short, it is now too apparent ; and I shall love Montgobert all my life, for having obliged you to resign your pen to her : this is, in my opinion, an instance of real friendship, for which I shall write her my thanks ; it is what I call having eyes and seeing with them. I care not a straw for the rest ; they have eyes and see not ; she and I both see alike, and for this reason I listen to no one but her : she durst not say a word to me this time ; her sincerity, and the

* Allusion to the death of Seneca.

fear of giving me pain, have prevented her. Mademoiselle de Mèri governs herself much better ; she writes not a syllable to any one. Corbinelli can kill himself at pleasure ; it is no more than putting pen to paper, and he is a dead man : let him keep out of sight of his writing-desk for a week, and he is in a manner risen from the dead. Quit yours a little, my dear, handsome as it is ; did not I say right, in saying it was putting a dagger into your hand against yourself ? I saw Du Chêne the other day ; he spoke of your health, and told me that writing was as bad as hanging. You have been at Lambesc and Salon ; these excursions, with your lungs, could not fail of being injurious to you ; you abandon your health entirely, and no one else seems to think of it. It would give you great concern to have any thing deranged : the company of the *Bohemians* must be complete, it seems ; as if your health were as robust and vigorous as theirs. What you ought to do, is to keep your bed, your chamber, to enjoy undisturbed repose, and attend to a strict regimen : instead of these, it is a perpetual hurrying up and down, visiting, bad hours, and fatigue. We can have no hopes of you, my child, while you prefer every thing in the world to the care of your health. I have ordered this first of human considerations in a very different way, and hold every thing in nature foreign to me, in comparison of the earnest attention I pay to what concerns you ; but I will close this subject for the present.

I informed you yesterday, by a sort of label, tagged to the end of an immense letter, that madame de Soubise was sent into exile ; this proves to be false. It seems she has spoken or perhaps grumbled a little, at her not having been appointed a lady of honour*, as the

* It is seen, in the *Memoirs de Montpensier*, that madame de Soubise pretended that the king had promised her the situation of lady of

queen wished ; perhaps too she might have despised her pension, compared to that charming situation ; and upon this, the queen has advised her to come and wear away her vexation at Paris. Here she is, and they say is ill of the measles ; she is not to be seen, but the world is of opinion she will return as if nothing had happened. A great bustle has been made about nothing ; the charitable spirit of wishing all the world lame and *lunched back* is spread wonderfully ; on the contrary, there are certain things, respecting which people find themselves disposed to pray for happiness, as in the times of the fairies. The marriage of mademoiselle de Blois, is one of those which gives real pleasure. The king bade her write her mother * word what he had been doing for her. All the world have been to pay their compliments to the Carmelite ; I fancy madame de Coulanges will take me there to-morrow ; the prince and duke have been there in great haste ; they say she has suited her style to her black veil wonderfully ; and that she has reasoned her maternal tenderness with that of the spouse of Jesus Christ. The king marries his daughter, as if he were marrying the queen's daughter to the king of Spain ; he gives her five hundred thousand crowns of gold, as is commonly done with these potentates, with this difference only, that the dower will be actually paid ; whereas, in general, the sum is only nominal, in honour of the alliance. This pretty wedding is to be celebrated about the middle of January. Gautier has no longer any reason to complain, as these marriages

honour, and that she had prated about it, and given offence to the king, notwithstanding his secret regard for her. In his vexation, he discovered to the queen, whose friendship madame de Soubise had imposed upon, how much she was her dupe. This occasioned her absence, though at that time the court only knew the reason partially.

* Madame de la Vallière.

will put upwards of a million this year into his hands : a hundred thousand livres are to be given immediately to madame de Rochefort, to begin making the dresses of the dauphiness. The elector had written to the merchants of Paris, to provide suits for his sister, but the king has written to him to give himself no trouble about it, as the princess will receive every thing she has occasion for, from those of the household that are to be sent her. This marriage will be celebrated with great splendour ; the parties do not set out till February. I expect Gordes with the utmost impatience, and will most assuredly leave *the skimming of my pot* * to whomsoever it shall please, that I may have the pleasure to ask him *how my daughter does, and what she is doing* ? If he should answer me like the chevalier de Buoust, I shall quit him with sighs ; for I cannot hear the strange things I am told of your health, without real uneasiness. The intendant is very happy in being so gallant, without the dread of making his wife jealous. I wish he could place his chess-men, so that every time he cried *check*, might be so many proofs of his passion. My passion for this game still continues ; I pique myself in causing M. de la Trousse to tell lies, and am sometimes apprehensive I shall not succeed. I am always well received when I come to pay your compliments ; your remembering them is always an honour. Madame de Coulanges will needs write to you, to thank you herself, but it will be next year first : she is busy with new-year's gifts, to which there is no end. I fancy you will think I fib, when I mention Fagon and du Chêne being acquainted : this was occasioned by

* That is, I will leave, to any body that pleases, the trouble of doing the honours of my house to my company.

† See Letter of the 8th December.

M. de Louvois's wound, when they were forty days together, during which they contracted a very sincere regard for each other. Do not laugh at what I am going to say : you must consult your watch, to know when you are hungry ; and when it tells you it is eight or nine hours since you ate any thing, you must take a good mess of pottage, which will destroy what is called indigestion.

We may then hope to see the coadjutor, and to reckon a princess amongst the number of his chickens. Alas ! who can know whether the little princess is contented with her lot ? The present whim of her husband, is to sound a horn to assemble his party round his bed : it seems to be the will of God, that nothing but himself should fully satisfy us. Ah, what a pretty story I have to tell you of the archbishop ! but I will leave this to some other opportunity. M. de Pomponne is returned to the banks of his Marne ; he had, the other evening, a greater number of persons of distinction than were ever assembled there before his disgrace : this is the fruit of his having been, in his prosperity, the same man to his friends, and you will see they will be the same to him. Madame de Vins is still affected to tears ; I have often seen her fine eyes red with weeping ; she will make no visit without me, since she lost you and madame de Villars. She has my leave to dispose of me as long as she thinks proper : I have too many reasons to be happy that it proves agreeable to her ; she has some affairs which detain her here unavoidably, though in her heart she wishes to be at Pomponne ; this attachment merits honour, and alleviates common misfortunes. Adieu, my dear beauty ; get some one to write to me after you have begun ; for I must have a few lines from yourself. Mademoiselle de Grignan, Montgobert, Gauthier, pray take pity upon me and my daughter. In

short, my child, relieve yourself, be mindful of your health, and shut your desk: it is the true temple of Janus; and be assured you cannot possibly give those who love you, either a more solid or real pleasure, than by preserving yourself for them, since writing is certain death to you.

LETTER DLXXXIX.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Wednesday, January 1, 1680.

MAY God grant a happy year to you, my dearest child, and to me the perfect joy of seeing you once more in better health than you are at present! I assure you I am very uneasy about you; perhaps it freezes at Aix, as it does here, and your lungs may be worse. I conjure you, affectionately, not to write so much to me, and not to reply to every particular of the trifles I send you; attend to me, persuade yourself it is a newspaper, for I promise you I think no more of what I write after it is once gone from me: these minute answers are much too long for our correspondence. Tell me in three or four lines how you do, and your present situation; you may add, if necessary, a single word of business, but no more, unless you can find some charitable person to write for you. The chevalier is sitting by his own fire-side, disabled in one hip: this rheumatism of his is a rare excuse. Madame de Soubise is still shut up at her own house*, where she gives out that she has the measles; it is thought this illness will last a considerable time. She pretended to claim the same access

* See the preceding Letter.

as a lady of honour; their majesties were of a different opinion. She says her pension was by no means enough for her; she must have said a great deal more than this. In short, she is now at Paris, that is past all doubt; as for the other stories, it is a mere chaos; every one saying what he thinks proper. The dauphiness has written some letters, which are thought so reasonable, just, and proper, as to give a very favourable opinion of her good sense. Her portrait is not handsome. You have heard how happily the prophecy of a second lady of the bed-chamber has been fulfilled.

Gordes is not yet arrived; I am extremely desirous to see one who has seen you. You will send me, you say, a new-year's gift; I am apprehensive it will be too handsome: my own is so light, that the smallest puff of an easterly wind will carry it off. I have heard nothing of those of St. Germain. The duchess of Savoy was in raptures with her screen; the young prince and the courtiers said nothing: the project in the device does not please them as much as it pleases the mother. However, all is signed and settled in Portugal; I know not how Providence will decide these different interests. M. de Pomponne has had his dismissal, but no money; he is returned to Pomponne. Madame de Vins is here; she thought of going to St. Germain, but would first ask madame de Richelieu's advice, who is at Paris. We had great difficulty in procuring access to her: the abbé Têtu gained us admittance, which madame de Coulanges could not effect; madame de Vins therefore waited for madame de Richelieu's answer, before she undertook the journey; I paid your compliments at the same time with my own; I told madame de Richelieu, that her merit obliged us to pay an extraordinary

kind of compliment, which was, to congratulate her on being no longer lady of honour to the queen* ; that she was the only person who could show us that there was any thing superior to her former situation : all this was paraphrased, so as not to wound her vanity. I will take care to present your compliments to madame d'Effiat †, madame de Rochefort ‡, and, if I possibly can, to madame de Vibraye §, who, on account of the situation of her affairs, has accepted the place of lady of honour to the princess de Conti ; it is said the king will have her ride in the queen's carriage, as well as madame de Montchevreuil : this is a cure for all ills. Madame de Langeron will recover her lost precedency at the same time ; for she had the same honour when she was governess. Poor Vibraye is drowned in pleasures ; she has great occasion to mortify the flesh, like our friend Tartuffe. This place had been offered to madame de Frontenac, which was convenient enough for the lady of a governor of Quebec ; but she answered she valued her repose and the *Divinity* ||, much more than a life of bustle and parade : this is all well, for madame de Vibraye has reason to take in good part their making choice of her for such a place at her age. M. and madame de Chaulnes send you a thousand compliments ; you know their way ; and madame de Coulanges a hundred thousand ; she would not consent her father should buy the house ¶ ; this delights me. I have

* Madame de Richelieu was lady of honour to the queen, when she was chosen to be lady of honour to the dauphiness.

† Governess to the prince's children.

‡ First lady of the bed-chamber to the dauphiness.

§ Polixenale Coigneux, wife of Henry Herault, marquis de Vibraye.

|| Mademoiselle d'Outrelaise, the intimate friend of madame de Frontenac.

¶ The hotel de Carnavalet.

always the chess-board in my head, though I fear I shall never be a good player. Herbert gave Corbinelli check-mate six times following, and made him as mad as a March hare ; this is all he got at the hotel de Condé. I must bid you adieu, my child, for long letters at present alarm me more than any thing. Thus we change as circumstances change, but only on your account, and from my affection for you, which is incapable of change, and is now become *my soul itself*. I am not sure whether the expression may be tolerated ; but I am sure, that to live and love you, are to me but one and the same thing.

LETTER DXC.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Friday, January 5, 1680.

AH, my beloved, how much I am obliged to madame du Janet, for taking the pen out of your hands ! If by means of the bad air of Salon, and your eternal fatigue, you are relapsing every moment, how much reason have I to conjure you a thousand times, to lay aside all thoughts of writing ! You talk of your disease with a skill that astonishes me ; but the interest I take in your welfare, enables me to understand all you tell me ! How much I wish that cursed easterly wind, and that wicked south, would suffer you to rest ! What a misfortune it is, to be exposed to the blast of two winds that so often prevail, and especially in Provence ! I ask you, my child, whether I ought not to be exceedingly uneasy at your present situation.

I was yesterday at the grand Carmelites with mademoiselle, who luckily bid madame de Lesdiguières to bring me along with her. We accordingly entered that

sacred abode: I was charmed with the good sense of mother Agnes; she mentioned you, as knowing you through her sister*. I saw madame Stuart, who is both happy and contented. I saw also mademoiselle d'Epernon, who thought me but little altered; we had not seen each other for upwards of thirty years; she seemed to me horribly changed. Little du Janet never left me; she took the white veil three days ago; she is a miracle of fervour and devotion: I shall relate this to her mother. But what an angel † appeared at last! whom the prince de Conti had detained in the parlour. She has, in my eyes, all the charms we formerly witnessed. I found her neither overgrown nor yellow; she is not quite so thin as formerly, but much happier; the same eyes, the same looks; neither austerities, bad diet, nor want of sleep, have been able to hollow or dim them; the habit, strange as it is, has had no effect on the gracefulness and elegance of her person: her modesty is no more than she possessed when she was delivered of the princess de Conti; but it is sufficient for a Carmelite. She said a thousand polite things to me, and then mentioned you so justly and so opportunely: every thing she uttered was so becoming her character, that it is impossible for any thing to exceed it. The prince de Conti loves and respects her greatly; she is his director: he is devout, and will, like his father, continue so. In reality, the habit and retirement of this place add wonderful dignity to her.

You have seen the effect of my prophecy. Certainly, the qualified person (madame de Montespan) cannot, in any degree, come in competition with the invalid; (madame de Maintenon); for she considers her as the

* The marchioness de Villars.

† Madame de Vallière.

confidential friend. The lady who is above all (the queen) does the same; so that she is the very soul of the court. I take pleasure in giving you this intelligence a few days beforehand, as I received it. The person that is not to be seen*, and whom no one mentions, is as well as heart could wish; she sometimes shows herself like a divinity, but holds no earthly correspondence; she has given magnificent new-year's gifts to her predecessor and all her children, to make up for past neglects, when louis d'ors were scarce.

Madame de Soubise is still at Paris, where she refuses to see any one; it is supposed she will remain there longer than she imagines; she has said several things which have given offence. Monsieur has desired Beauvais to quit the Palais Royal; he found her in Madame's apartment, in conversation with the count de Soissons†. She is at madame de Vibraye's. This is the surest way of marrying Beauvais to that prince, who would make it a point of honour not to abandon her, as what she suffers is on his account. It is said that madame de Vibraye will be appointed a lady of honour to the princess of Conti, with all the privileges of a lady of the palace.

I have this morning received a very long letter from madame de Villars; I would have sent it to you, if it contained any thing more than three points you are al-

* Mademoiselle de Fontanges.

† Louis Thomas de Savoy, count de Soissons, married, in December 1682, Urania de la Croyte-de-Beauvais.

Madame says, in her letters: "The king fell in love with mademoiselle de Beauvais; but she remained firm: he then turned his thoughts to her companion, La Fontanges." She was daughter of the madame de Beauvais, first lady of the bedchamber to queen Anne of Austria, who, though blind of one eye, without youth or beauty, first gave the young Lewis XIV. a taste for pleasures, which afterwards occupied so large a space in his life.

ready acquainted with ; that is, the esteem, admiration, and affection, you know she entertains for you ; much affliction and astonishment at M. de Pomponne's misfortune, which you are beginning to get the better of ; the news from Spain, and the praises of madame de Grancey, which you know likewise. It appears, besides, that she confines herself a good deal at home, as she wants to shun all appearance of uneasiness, and to give the lie to the prophecies. The queen is to see her *incog.* but she obliges them to use great entreaty first, to give her merit a new lustre. The young queen is perfectly adored ; she made her appearance for the last time at the queen-mother's, dressed in the French fashion. She teaches the king French, and the king teaches her Spanish : all goes well hitherto.

Madame de Coulanges is at St. Germain, where she is very busy about the new year's gifts ; and it happens that poor La Trousse has the whole fatigue of it. He is always busy : and she harsh, contemptuous, and satirical ; it is impossible to form an idea of their method of going on. The marchioness (de la Trousse) is constantly in a rage, and her daughter in despair. I keep up every acquaintance you desire I should. Madame de Lesdiguières has given me a thousand compliments for you, and very genteelly. I shall give yours to madame de Rochefort ; and as for her companion*, madame de Coulanges will take the office upon herself. Madame de Vins is still here ; the other ladies are at Pomponne : their house at Paris had like to have been burnt to the ground ; one room, with its furniture, was entirely consumed : but the miracle is, that there was some powder in it which did not take fire, and which, in all probability, would have blown the house up : this would have completed their ruin, but God has preserved them.

* Madame de Maintenon.

Adieu, my dear, lovely child. My son, who is still at Nantes, would like to put off his return till the dauphiness is with child: I laughed at his idea, and have written to him, either to come away, or to sell his office.

LETTER DXCI.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Wednesday, January 10, 1680.

IF I had a heart of crystal, in which you could view the grief that overwhelms me at your wishing I may outlive you, you would then also clearly perceive with how much sincerity, I pray that Providence will not invert the ordinary course of nature, who has called me into the world before you, that I might be your mother; reason, and the established order of things, require me to depart the first; and God knows with what earnestness I pray, that this order may be preserved in my case. I cannot believe but the justice of this sentiment must affect you, as much as it affects me: after this reflection, my child, you will have no difficulty in conceiving the interest I take in your preservation. I conjure you, by all the regard you entertain for me, never to write me more than a sheet at most; bid somebody else write to me, and even give up dictating, as even that fatigues. I cannot find the least pleasure, in what gave me the highest gratification heretofore, when you were absent: and the length of your letters really does me more harm, than they do you. I entreat you to deliver me from this pang; I shall still have but too many left. Madame de Schomberg advises, if you must, at all events, drink coffee, to sweeten it with Narbonne honey instead of sugar: this is good for the lungs; it is only allowed to M. de Schomberg, when qualified in this way. He

has been extremely ill for six or seven months past. I am perfectly well. I told you what an excellent effect the purgative medicine had on me, and the cherry water too. My hands I consider as cured, and I never trouble myself about them. Ah, my dear child, think of nothing but your health! neglect nothing you think capable of affording you relief; you are too well-acquainted with the nature of affection, to doubt of what I suffer, when I think of your situation: a thought which never quits me.

I am entirely of your opinion in respect to the household of the dauphiness. Marshal d'Humieres has written to Rouville, that he is the servant of the devotees, ever since he saw that marshal de Bellefond was made equerry, madame d'Effiat governess, and madame de Vibraye lady of honour. They say, this last has been rejected, as having made a great pother, and a multitude of requests. It is pretended, that any place, be it what it may, *in the Lord's house*, is an honour to the person appointed to it. Formerly the queen's ladies of honour were marchionesses, and all the great offices in the king's household were filled with lords only; now, all the world is a duke, and a marshal of France; every thing is risen.

M. de Pomponne is come here to settle his affairs, and is going to receive his money. I see madame de Vins frequently, who, as she has nothing particular to say, does not write to you, to avoid giving you the trouble of writing unnecessarily. M. de Bussy and his daughter* have dined here twice; they have really an infinite deal of wit; they entreat me to make their compliments to you. Little Coulanges is here, just the same as ever: madame de Rochefort takes her with her to meet the

* Louisa-Frances de Rabutin, marchioness de Coligni.

dauphiness: I advised her to take that journey, as she had no better employment on her hands; and perhaps it may do her good, to write some entertaining account of it. Adieu, my best beloved; I know nothing: I am of opinion too, that by shortening my letters I may occasion you fewer reflections, and possibly diminish your ardour to write. This is what I sincerely desire, as I can form no wish but what has your good for its object.

My son is returned into Britany, to spend Twelfth-tide; he assures me he will be here the 20th; God grant he may. Madame de Soubise is still invisible; she will be at Paris longer than she imagines; she has been extremely well served in this country. Mademoiselle de Fontanges is a *singular* beauty*; she appears in the gallery like some goddess; and madame de Montespan, on the other side, like another goddess. This singular beauty has given new year's gifts to the amount of six thousand pistoles†. Madame de Coulanges has been greatly admired for the part she has had the management of.

* This is how Madame describes her in her letters: "La Fontanges, though a little freckled, was beautiful from head to foot; nothing more wonderful was ever seen. She had, also, the best character possible, but no more sense than a kitten." The abbé de Choisy says, "She was as handsome as an angel, and as stupid as a post."

† The following is a trait of the magnificent gallantry of the times, as related in a letter of madame de Scudery to Bussy:

"Mademoiselle de *** has received a very gallant new year's gift. She found upon her toilet a little devil holding a German mouse, which, as soon as she touched it, opened of itself, and let fall two bracelets of the value of a thousand louis each, with a slip of paper, on which was the inscription: *The devil is in it.*"

LETTER DCXII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Friday, January 12, 1680.

I CONJURE you, my child, never to make peace with your enemy, the writing-desk, which is alone sufficient to exhaust you; and this, not only in compliance with necessity, but from a firm resolution of shunning every thing pernicious to you: it is preserving my life, to be careful of your own. I yesterday told you madame de Schomberg's advice, to sweeten your coffee with Narbonne honey, instead of sugar: I have since met du Chêne by accident, who absolutely prohibits coffee in any shape whatever. You may make the experiment however. Should M. de Grignan be offended with me, and if you think my approbation of his note to madame de Coulanges will contribute to soften him, I flatter myself you will not let slip that opportunity of accommodating matters between us. I never met with any thing so well imagined as the conclusion of that note, nor so gallantly turned. Madame de Coulanges is still more charmed with it than I am, and M. de la Trousse, who happened to be at her house, has overcome his usual coldness, in his admiration of it; it was he who made me send it away yesterday evening. Your letter to madame de Coulanges is very good, but that of M. de Grignan eclipses all. Try what you are able to make of this, in order to repair my injustice; you must add my real sentiments, which might justly plead my excuse for any fault I could possibly commit; for, if all were properly translated, what I have said would be found to proceed from friendship, interest, regard and veneration for a name

and a house, which he ought to honour still more than I do; it is the misfortune arising from a number of concurring circumstances, which fall on a person I so dearly love, and who returns all my affection; but then, since this person is but his other half, and he will needs be so severe to himself, it is by no means sufficient, it does not satisfy us, and we could wish it were in our power to bestow upon him a greater share of sensibility, both with regard to her and to himself: see what your address can effect, with so large a stock of excellent materials; for I really could not help being vexed, to think I had fallen out with a man who writes so charmingly. I should be glad to know whence he derives such thoughts, such noble and gallant turns, which convert satire into the most obliging thing in the world. While I am on the subject of letters, I must say a word or two of that of Paulina to the coadjutor. I am apprehensive she will one day shame her relations: I never met with a little personage so properly named; mean time, till she puts us all to the blush, I embrace her affectionately, and rejoice with you at her natural and sprightly wit. I begin to fear the marquis loves me less than he used to do: pray ask him if I am mistaken?

The king is unboundedly liberal: indeed, I see no reason to despair: though a person may not be groom of his bedchamber, it may happen, that by making his court he may find himself in some of his cast-off garments: thus much is certain, that all our services go for nothing, while we keep at a distance: it was otherwise formerly. I spent the whole of yesterday evening with M. and madame de Pomponne; madame de Vins and I had been to visit the countess de Roye, to pay her our compliments of condolence on the death of old Rouci. You are greatly beloved and esteemed in this family: I told them you omit no opportunity of inquiring after them;

their gratitude is at least equal to the interest you take in their fortunes. M. de Pomponne will have occasion for all his philosophy, to enable him to forget this country entirely, and to accustom himself to live at Paris. Do you know that there is a kind of fatality in this vortex, which prevents our being able at first to discover the charms of tranquillity and repose? As he is of this opinion, we ought to believe him possessed of sound good sense. He is now employed in receiving his money, and discharging his debts: this occupation both renews his affliction, and determines his future conduct. I am convinced that madame de Vins's destiny, being involved in his, creates him the most uneasiness; this is a very natural feeling, and at the same time a very worthy one, on account of her sentiments for him: I think I never saw so many fine things in one place as there are in this house. We talked much of madame de Richelieu, who is beginning to find her legs again, and who, having neither time at present to eat nor sleep, ought to dread the fate of one who had a much greater share of sense than herself, and was much better used to noise; for, before madame de Montausier* came to the Louvre, the hotel de Rambouillet was the Louvre, so that she has only changed the scene of action. We are every moment expecting to hear the name of the princess de Conti's lady of honour; it is time; she is to be married on Tuesday.

Your brother is by no means eager to make his court; he is carousing at his ease at Tonquedec's: I conceal all under the mask of business I have for him at Nantes, though M. de la Trousse chides me severely for employing him in such matters. It might have been concluded long ago, had he thought fit: it is true, he will not

* Julia-Lucia d'Angennes, duchess de Montausier, was governess to the prince, and afterwards first lady of honour to the queen.

make his appearance for a fortnight ; and to pay him a compliment which is but his due, when he is here, he performs his part extremely well ; he pleases, and is thought an excellent companion. Poor Pomenars was cut for the stone yesterday, and underwent the operation with heroic courage. Madame de Chaulnes set me the example to visit him ; the stone that was taken from him is as large as a small egg ; he chatters like a woman newly brought to bed, and has more joy than ever he felt pain ; and to fulfil M. de Maille's prophecy, who one day told Pomenars he would never die unconfessed, he went to confess, the day before the operation, to the great Bourdaloue. Ah, what a confession must this have been ! he was with him four hours. I asked him whether he had told all ; he swore he had, and that he did not *weigh a grain** ; for he had told all, and you know there is nothing to be said after that : he did not languish at all, after receiving absolution, and it went off well ; the best of it was, he had not confessed for eight or ten years past : he mentioned you to me, and is so gay that his tongue is never still. I shall make your compliments to the other gentleman, who is always so happy and contented† ; and of whom it may with great justice be said, that he has resources of hope, which smell strongly of one of those cells you know of : except in this particular, that he does not want for good sense : his daughter‡ would delight you. I am chattering, my dearest, without telling you any news, because I know none. The duke of Hanover is dead at Venice, and his wife is settled here with very little property, and three daughters, who are very young : M. d'Osnabruck suc-

* It was no secret that the marquis de Pomenars had several times been tried for his life, and once among the rest for falsifying the coin.

† M. de Bussy.

‡ The marchioness de Coligai.

ceeds him. Madame de Meckelbourg lodges in the Rue Tarane, where La Marans lodged : it is far from being like the hotel de Longueville. I have told you of all the beauties, and all the new-year's gifts : La Fontanges has given to the amount of twenty thousand crowns, without dreaming of making a present to madame de Coulanges, who has been at the trouble of preparing those she gave away to others : her star is really very whimsical on all occasions ; for the things the most easy to comprehend, are become absolutely inconceivable. Make no answer, my dear child, to all these trifles ; they hardly merit the trouble of reading ; be careful of yourself ; write little ; yet I would have you say a word or two about that colic that so constantly attends you : Guéméné, the mother, had promised to return from the country, to take her daughter-in-law to Saint Germain ; she keeps her in suspense, perhaps, out of mere malice. This is, however, a fine season for her, she will find none of the Soubises nor the Luynes in the way.

LETTER DXCIII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Wednesday, January 17, 1680.

THE time is past, my poor child, when it was my chief consolation to receive a long letter from you ; at present it is a real pain to me : and when I think of that which writing occasions you, and of the evident injury it does you, I maintain that your letters can never be sufficiently short ; and that if you had any regard for yourself, or for me, you would undoubtedly, from necessity or precaution, pursue this conduct. When you find yourself at all uncomfortable, repose yourself ; when you do

not, still take care of yourself ; and since that health, which is so precious, but of whose value we were never so well convinced as now it is gone, obliges you to be watchful, think it your only business, and that for which I shall hold myself chiefly indebted to you. You seem to me to be overwhelmed with the expenses at Aix : it is really hard, when you thought your affairs in Provence a little improved, to find them in a worse condition than before. You wish to be at Grignan ; it is the only place, you tell me, where you can live within bounds. I am convinced some stay at your chateau would be of service to you in this respect ; but this, from the state you are in, ought not to weigh with you ; your health should hold the first rank, and regulate all your proceedings. What human consideration can possibly induce those who love you, to leave you in an air which visibly destroys you ? You who are so sensible of the ill effects of the north-easterly wind of Aix and Salon, ought to be much more apprehensive of that of Grignan*. Thus, my child, you must necessarily adopt some prudent resolution ; when you come here, you must lay aside your restlessness ; there is no good to be obtained from this perpetual hurrying from place to place ; you must change your manners, as your health and constitution change ; you ought to say, I will travel no longer, I will rest : but instead of speaking sincerely to M. de Grignan, who loves you, who would be loath to lose you, and who sees, as well as I do, how necessary

* The castle of Grignan stands very high, and of course is more exposed to the wind than either Aix or Salon. The *bise* is a wind which blows from the north-east, and is dangerous for those who have any weakness on the lungs, especially in the provinces adjoining to the Alps and the Mediterranean, where the *bise* is also very unfavourable to navigation. This seems to be a sort of Levant wind, common in all the countries on the Mediterranean.

repose and good air are for you, of your real situation, it appears, that you would deceive him and yourself, by telling him you are in health, when you are as ill as you possibly can be. This conduct, which has hitherto served no other purpose but to injure you, must be corrected. We will talk of it again some other opportunity, but I could not help telling you thus much : I leave you to make the proper reflections.

I fancy you think the court very stormy. You have reason to be astonished at madame de Soubise ; no one is acquainted with the real cause of this disgrace ; it does not appear she will be a victim ; she wanted a place the king had no intention she should have ; a great many epigrams might be said on the occasion. As soon as she found all the distinction she was to enjoy, reduced to an augmentation of salary, she spoke of it, complained of it, came to Paris. *I am come here, and here I am still*, &c. It would be no difficult matter to give the rest of these verses the same turn. Not a soul is allowed to see her, brother, sister, aunt, nor cousin ; she has no society but madame de Rochefort. It is impossible to make her utter what she never said, as she is quite a recluse ; meanwhile she is well served below, and is in hopes of rising again. Some, however, are of opinion, she may find herself mistaken ; if it prove so, she must lead a new life ; a longer retreat would hardly be supportable : madame de Rochefort is not to be seen either. There will be a fine woman the less at the entertainments given on occasion of the grand wedding.

Mademoiselle de Blois is now princess of Conti ; she was betrothed on Monday in great state, and married yesterday in the face of the sun, in the chapel of Saint Germain ; a grand banquet, as on the day before ; after dinner a play, and in the evening the putting to

bed, the shirt and shift being given by the king and queen. If I should see any person from court before I close this letter, I will add a postscript. But pray observe the consequence of seeking after places; it is certain, the ladies who were named to be ladies of honour to that princess, had used all possible diligence. Chance put madame de Buri*, who is fifty leagues off, into madame Colbert's head; she had seen her formerly, and she mentioned her to M. de Lavardin, her nephew; she also mentioned her to the king; she was found to be the very person they could have wished for; they wrote to her, that she was to have a pension of six thousand livres, with the privilege of riding in the queen's carriage. Father Bourdaloue, who is her confessor, for she is no Jansenist, like madame de Vibraye, has written. It was this word *Jansenist*, which caused the latter to be rejected, though she is under the direction of Saint Sulpicius, who is, in matters of doctrine, with the Jesuits. In short, the courier is set out, and is expected back to-morrow. Madame de Lavardin makes madame de Buri a present of a black robe, a petticoat, a point handkerchief, and a pair of ruffles, all ready to put on. La Senneterre has in vain revolved round Bourdaloue†; no news. You wonder the crowd should be so great, you are not singular; but the rage is, to be

* Anne-Marie d'Eurie, d'Arguebonne, widow of Francis de Rostaing, count of Buri.

† See the austere director, the thundering preacher, the great Bourdaloue, making ladies of honour, and selecting them from among the Molinists! This is worthy of remark; and so much the more, as he was seen, several years after, to refuse a situation the most advantageous for a man of intrigue, if he had been so. Madame de Maintenon wished him to have the direction of her conscience. He would only promise her two days in the year, the rest being devoted to preaching. It is true, that, in the end, he reproached her for having chosen a director who was not a Jesuit.

there *in ogni modo*. So then, here is a friend of the coadjutor's in place still : she is a talking mill, as you know ; she speaks *Buri*, that is, a particular language of her own ; but it has had no share in procuring her the place. That of madame de Clerambault is very extraordinary ; she is protected by the princess, who would fain have made her lady of honour to the queen. She goes to court as if nothing had happened ; she seems to have lost all recollection of having been what she is no longer, a governess* ;

Et trouve le chagrin que Monsieur lui prescrit,
Trop digne de mepris pour y preter l'esprit.

And finds the sorrow that Monsieur prescribes,
Not worth a serious thought, whate'er betides.

I now begin to think you as jealous a wife as M. de Grignan is a fond husband. Montgobert mentions a ball, where I think I see the pretty little marquis dance charmingly. Is Paulina as fond of dancing as her sister d'Adhemar ? This accomplishment is all that is wanting, to make her the most charming child in the world. Pray amuse yourself with her, and do not send her where she will probably be spoiled ; I have a great desire to see her.

I am going to tell you a droll circumstance, to which Corbinelli is witness. I told him on Monday morning, I had been dreaming all the night of madame de Rus ; that I could not conceive how she could have come into my head, and that I would ask you to give me some information respecting her. Upon this I received your letter, in which you mention the very person, as if you

* Madame says, in her letters, that this lady was removed merely because she was attached to her ; that it was a trick of madame de Grancey, whose youngest daughter was the mistress of the chevalier de Lorraine, who was himself the favourite of Monsieur.

had heard what I said : this is very droll, and I have now the information I wanted. Strange, that a man should be in love with this creature to such a degree as to ruin himself for her ! But it is thus she always captivates ; I have nothing half so marvellous to tell you. I have not yet forgotten the count de Suze ; M. de Saint Omer, his brother, has been at the point of death, and has received all the sacraments ; he refused to be bled, though in a high fever, attended with inflammation. The English physician caused him to be bled by force ; guess whether he stood in need of it ; and afterwards, with his medicine, restored him to life ; in a few days he will be able to play at chuck-farthing again. And so the poor lieutenant's lady, who was so fond of M. de Vins, and was so apprehensive he should not know it, is dead, and at so early an age ! pray let me know what she died of : I am always surprised at the death of young persons. You have just reason to complain of the manner in which I educated you : had you learned to take time as it flies, it would have contributed greatly to your amusement.

Did you remark the Dutch gazette ? It enumerates those who are to have places about the dauphiness ; M. de Richelieu, gentleman of honour ; marshal de Bellefond, first equerry ; M. de Saint Gerom, *nothing* *. Is not this excellent ? This jest has reached Holland. My son is still the darling of Quimper ; though I fancy he is now at Nantes, and that he will be here by the end of the month. You see I brought him up in a much better manner than I did you. I hope in a fortnight he will not be seen there, but will be ready to set out with the rest. Be sure you do not write, at least do not think of replying to all my nonsense, since I shall have

* See Letter of December 25.

forgotten the greatest part of it myself in three weeks. If Montgobert's health will permit her to write, she will be a great relief to you, and will even save you the trouble of dictating; she writes as we do.

I am delighted with your plan of eating suppers; this is much better than your twelve spoonfuls of milk. *Atas*, my child, I change hourly; I know not what I would have: except that I wish above all things, you could recover your health; you must pardon me, if I pursue what I think best; if I change my advice, it is always under the name and prospect of some good. As for you, my beloved, never suffer yourself to change the good opinion you ought to have of yourself, let fortune show herself ever so cross and malignant. Indeed did she but think fit, M. and madame de Grignan might well enjoy the rank at court to which they are entitled: but you know where all these matters are decided, and the fruitlessness of that vexation, which, however, it is impossible to avoid.

I know not yet any particulars of the wedding. I know not whether the marriage was celebrated by sunshine or by moonlight. I shall go to madame de Vins to make up my packet, and will acquaint you with what I can learn. However, I will tell you a very extraordinary piece of news, which is, that the prince was shaved yesterday; actually shaved: I assure you, it is no illusion, no supposition, but a truth: the whole court was witness to it, and madame de Langeron, taking the opportunity, when his paws were laid across like the lion's, put him on a cassac with diamond buttons; a valet-de-chambre too abused his patience, frizzed and powdered his hair, and at last brought him to the figure of a courtier of the first fashion, and gave his head a grace, that confounded the finest peruke of them all; this is one miracle of the marriage. The

prince de Conti's dress was inestimable; it was embroidered with diamonds of an immense size, in the pattern of black velvet figures, on a straw-coloured ground. It is said the ground had but an indifferent effect, and that madame de Langeron, who is the soul of all the dresses at the hotel de Condé, fell sick in consequence. In fact, these are things which admit of no consolation. The duke, the duchess, and mademoiselle de Bourbon, wore each a different suit, enriched with jewels, every day. But I forget what is best of all, that the prince's sword was studded with diamonds,

*La famosa spada,
Al' cui valore ogni vittoria è certa*.*

The lining of the prince de Conti's cloak was black satin, studded with diamonds. The princess was romantically beautiful, elegantly dressed, and happy.

*Qu'il est doux de trouver dans un amant qu'on aime,
Un epoux que l'on doit aimer! †*

This is all I know of the matter; I will tell you what I can learn in the evening. I advise you to get some person to read the gazettes to you; they are extremely well written.

M. Courtin is returned from St. Germain; he saw every thing: the sun shone upon the marriage at noon; the moon witnessed what passed afterwards. The king embraced the princess affectionately after she was in bed, and besought her to be gentle and obedient to the prince of Conti. I dare say she was so.

* The famous sword, which is always certain of victory.

† How delightful it is to find, in a lover we adore, a husband whom duty commands us to love!

LETTER DXCIV.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Wednesday, January 19, 1680.

I DID not ask you to write me a sheet ; I meant a page, or rather a single line from your hand ; in short, nothing but what you might have done without putting yourself to the smallest inconvenience. If you are ill, my dear child, you cannot possibly write ; if you are otherwise, keep yourself quiet, and beware of a relapse. When the weather is mild here, I conclude it must be still milder at Aix ; but then even the mild air of that place is piercing, and proves sometimes as troublesome to you as your *bise**. When you walk out on those fine days which I remember, do you feel the same pain and heaviness ? are you not always more or less affected with this complaint ? I admire how we can dwell forever on one thought, to the rejection of every other : this is the telescope, which brings objects near, or sends them to a distance from us.

I must thank you for your charming new-year's gifts ; they are very useful to me ; I am delighted with them, and the time is coming when I shall thank you in my heart every day for them. Should they happen to change colour, I shall take care to make no inference from it, with regard to your friendship for me : the case is different with respect to my pitiful gifts ; the moment I cease to love you, they will grow as green as a leek ; watch them narrowly, my child ; I refer you entirely to this indubitable proof, so that without my taking the smallest trouble, or so much as saying a word about the

* A north-east wind blowing from the mountains.

matter, you will be able to form a judgement of the true state of my affection. I thank you, therefore, for your pretty present, and I receive as a mark of your regard, the value you set upon mine, though intrinsically of little or no worth to you. This is the only mortification my straitened circumstances give me ; but then that mortification is by no means so small as my fortune ; I am overwhelmed with grief at it, and consider the plenty of madame de Verneuil * as a pleasure much surpassing her principality. I must not forget to tell you that I have just written to her. I have not yet seen M. de Gardes, but will find him out. You have not hit the mark in regard to your prophecies ; you will still find mesdames de Crequi and de Richelieu ladies of honour. The choice is too excellent to admit of their having any companions in office ; the king never had the smallest intention of allowing the honours and privileges of that place to madame de Soubise, and it is because she both expected, and gave out, she was to have them, that she is now at Paris : when she found, on its being explained to her, that it was only an augmentation of her salary to ten thousand livres, she complained and spoke of it ; this is all I know of the affair. The good offices of this part of the world, have been very generously done in her absence. She keeps herself retired, that she may no longer be under the necessity to speak. Yet for all these fancied measles, and this perfect retirement, we spectators are far from being satisfied. It is, however, believed, all will be made up again in time ; but then she has lost the sight of a fine wedding : this is far from being a matter of indiffer-

* Charlotte Segulier, widow of Maximilian de Bethune, duke of Sully, and married a second time, October 29, 1668, to Henry de Bourbon, duke of Verneuil.

ence to a person who thinks there is no living out of a court.

M. de Marsillac is so entirely taken up with hunting and attendance at court, that he is like an *imbécile*. He neither answers M. de la Rochefoucault's nor Langlade's letters, though they wholly regard his own affairs. Still if M. de Grignan were to come and dine with him, or put it in his power to serve him, he would still find him the same hearty friend as ever; of this his father every day assures me, and at the same time presents you his kindest remembrances, and always inquires after your health very particularly. Madame de la Fayette shows greater kindness still, both on account of your old and renewed friendship. Madame de Vins appears to be very sincere: she entreats you not to write to her: a person must certainly have no sort of regard for you, to require what could not fail of proving injurious to you, which writing most assuredly does. When I visit M. de Pomponne, I no longer consider him as a minister, but as the worthiest man in existence. He has not yet been paid his whole salary. I believe madame de Vins will soon go to Saint Germain; madame de Richelieu begged she would: I pity her, in being obliged to take so melancholy a journey as this must be to her: I cannot yet reconcile myself to this mortifying disgrace.

My son has not written to me; he is not yet returned to Nantes: I had till now taken the whole responsibility upon myself, by giving out that he was gone about my affairs; but I begin to sink under M. de la Trousse's bitter reproaches, who tells me, I ought first to have made him sell his place, that he might have nothing to do but to be my agent. I am persuaded that he will return when I least think of it, and that in a week afterwards he will be off again. The ladies belonging to

the dauphiness are to set out on the 25th for Schélestat. The chevalier was at the wedding ; it will be his own fault if you do not receive a full account of it from him. The beautiful Fontanges did not make her appearance ; they say she is inconsolable for the death of a little boy. Adieu, my dearest, loveliest child ; I embrace your children and mine, and those of M. de Grignan.

LETTER DXCV.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Wednesday, January 6, 1680.

THIS little fit of illness lasts a long time, and is, I guess, very troublesome. There is no one who has not been more or less affected with a pain in the stomach ; but that you complain of is so deeply seated, and you suffer so much, my dear child, that I have always admired your meekness and patience. I see plainly it does not proceed from want of repose ; you have been extremely well managed ; your walks have taken place on the most charming days that were ever seen ; so that all your ailments come from your chest, your blood, and your lungs. I am very happy that the advice I gave you, from M. de Fagon, to eat more heartily, has succeeded so well. This regimen, for persons of delicate constitutions, is now much used. You may adopt what resolution you think proper, as to the use of milk.

M. de Grignan has done me a signal pleasure, in mentioning my little marquis ; I have a great friendship for him : but as for Paulina, I am in love with her ; she appears to me the most charming little creature in the universe. M. de Mêmes spoke of her to me the other day exactly in this style ; it seems he was just come-

from seeing her: both himself and his wife are still full of the hearty welcome and polite reception you gave them. Mademoiselle de la Basiniere is become a recluse, with madame de la Fayette: certain family interests, and a very ill temper, have been the cause of this retirement, which proves extremely irksome to her. My son is not yet arrived at Nantes; as I have already said too much on this subject, I will add no more now. He might have been here two months ago, if he had retrenched from his journey the days he has bestowed on the enchanting pleasures of Lower Britany. He went to spend the holidays at fifty leagues from Nantes. He passed through Saint-Brien, the bishop of which is appointed to the bishopric of Poitiers. I am always attentive to news about bishoprics, on our handsome abbé's account. The household of the dauphiness sets out to-morrow to meet that princess, whose physiognomy did not promise such good fortune. She * who loves you so much, must be an amiable princess to retain so good a taste, at so great a distance, and for so long a time. Madame de Solre is not at Paris; if she had been there, I think she would have sent me word, or I should, in some way or other, have heard of her.

The princess de Conti is still a charming creature. She is in good health, and they tell wonders of the prince de Conti's goodness of heart and generosity; he lavishes his money like a hero, has all the affability of Henry IV., the integrity of the chevalier Bayard, and the justice of Sylla †: in short, they relate five or six wonderful things of him. Madame de Buri was received by the king in a manner that exceeded her most san-

* Anne Elizabeth de Lorraine, princess de Vaudemont.

† This name is found in all the editions: but the comparison is so extraordinary, that it seems as if it should be *Sully* instead of *Sylla*.

guine expectations*. He recommended to her care the conduct of his daughter, for so he always calls her, and loves her dearly. He has given a salary of two thousand crowns to this Buri, who that very day took her seat in the queen's carriage. With this addition, it is one of the best places about the court: what she may expect from the Condé family must consist of presents, for she is immediately dependent on the king. Now is madame de Langeron's time to try whether she can obtain the honour of the queen's carriage, which she lost through the family of Condé. It is difficult to form a judgement of the effect of a person's conduct: madame de Buri, at the distance of fifty leagues from court, is taken to fill a place, which has been made exceedingly advantageous. Madame de Saint Geran†, who has been licking the outside of the pitcher, has got nothing. M. de Saint Brien, in his diocese, is translated to Poitiers, according to his wish; while others, who attended at the king's mass in ranks, like so many strings of onions, have only had their labour for their pains: what inference can we draw from this, but that every thing goes as God would have it? Paulina and I still adhere to this perverse opinion; she answered you in this strain.

* Madame de Buri, who is somewhat ill-treated here, is misrepresented by M. de Saint Simon in a much more favourable view. It is worthy of remark, that it was she who introduced her niece, mademoiselle de Choin, at court, who was beloved by, and secretly married (it is said) to, the dauphin.

† N. d'O., married to Bernard de la Guiche C. de Saint Geran, was the intimate and confidential friend of madame de Maintenon. Their letters are still in being. It was to her madame de Maintenon wrote: "The master comes to my house in spite of me, and goes away in despair without being repulsed." It has been seen, that, like her, her husband paid his court as any pica. The duke de Beaufort said of him, "The fat St. Geran is an honest man, but his worth will not be fully estimated till he is dead."

M. de St. Omer * is cured by the Englishman. The duchess de Saint Aignan † lies dead through his means ; it is true his medicine was not administered till she was in the last agonies. Her husband is returned post from Havre, on the old wings of his old passion. He arrived as she was expiring, kissed her hand, shrieked, and groaned ; he is going to give us a touch of a *Sierra Morena*, in his retirement and mourning. Madame de Livri ‡ is in great affliction ; she has lost her all.

I have seen madame de Coulanges ; she embraces you, and seems much pleased with your mode of corresponding. She has been at Saint Germain, where she was continually caressed, not to say spoiled. She was in some disfavour with the countess de Grammont : the abbé Teto, though he had given up visiting her, has used his influence to make up the affair, and has succeeded. The dauphin asked M. de Montausier, when he thought the dauphiness would be with child ? They are to be married to-morrow at Munich ; I suppose he thinks she will become so, immediately on her arrival at Schélestat ; the prince, her brother, is to be the proxy. They have sent from hence the magnificent dresses which the elector had ordered for himself and his sister ; but not so many as he wished, because nothing can exceed the magnificence of those which madame de Rochefort is to take to the princess. The lady of honour, the ladies of the wardrobe, the maids, the governess, the gentlemen, in short, the whole household, set out to-morrow. Madame de Coulanges is at present in the whirl of preparation for their departure ; they are all at Paris :

* Afterwards archbishop d'Auch.

† Wife of Beauvilliers, duke de Saint Aignan.

‡ Marie-Antoinette de Beauvilliers, wife of Lewis Sanguin, marquis of Livri.

I have a very tragical story to tell you. Poor Bertillac, as a punishment for her past sins, is become passionately in love with the insensible C***.† He witnessed the rising flame, and saw that she used no effort to suppress it: he lost not a moment, but came at once to the point, and caused her to pawn her jewels to enable him to hold out a little longer at basset. He was seen to come to madame de Saint Quintin's with a thousand louis-d'ors, which he chinked all the way; his extreme gratitude compelled him to tell where he had them. This conduct has so sensibly affected La Bertillac, that she has become, as formerly, stupid with surprise; so that, her blood and spirits being perfectly stagnated, she is now actually bloated and gangrened, and I may say at death's door. The little Coulanges and I went there yesterday; they expect her every moment to give up the ghost. She will not be much lamented: the father and husband both sincerely wish her in her grave. There are not two opinions of the cause of her death. Madame de Frontenac seems perfectly ashamed at it, as well as the rest of the sex, who ought, in justice to themselves, to tear C**** limb from limb, like another Orpheus. I assure you he shall never be my hero: I am as inveterate against him, as madame de Coulanges is against La Fare‡; she never now takes any notice of him, and tells the world, in plain terms, he has deceived her: she is the only one alive who is sorry for it. La Sablière has taken his

† It is evident, by the supplement to Bussy's *Memoirs*, that M. de Caderousse was the hero of this vile adventure. But the lady is there called madame de Rambure. Perhaps she had changed her name, or bore two.

‡ The marquis de la Fare, known by his verses, his memoirs, and by the friendship of Chaulieu, had been in love with madame de Coulanges, and was beloved by madame de la Sablière.

part like a pretty and spirited personage. My hatred to C**** is far from springing from the same source, as you may perceive ; for he has never deceived me.

Wednesday, six in the evening.

My long letter is sent away ; but in case of extraordinary news I cannot help writing, though you may possibly receive the information from others. I must tell you, then, that the countess de Soissons is this evening set out for Liege, or some other place not belonging to the dominions of France. La Voisin observed her very narrowly, and I imagine his majesty has given her time to retire. M. de Luxembourg has voluntarily committed himself to the Bastile, and has sufficient confidence in his own innocence to have no fear of acting thus. They begin to talk of madame de Tingois, and several others ; but it is all a chaos of uncertainty, though what I send you is fact : the rest on Friday.

The countess has been summoned to appear *within three short days* ; that is to say, she is to take her trial for contumacy. The king said to madame de Carignan, " I have been very desirous, madam, that the countess should clear herself ; perhaps I may one day render an account to God and my people of the sincerity of my intentions." And, with regard to the apartment madame de Carignan requested for her, the king made answer, he had already given orders about it.

LETTER DXCVI.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Friday, January 26, 1680.

I BEGIN with the state of your health, as the subject nearest my heart. It is without disparagement to this favourite idea, that I see and hear what passes in the world : events are more or less interesting to me, as they are more or less connected with you : even the attention I pay to news, springs from the same source. I find you well nursed, my dear child, and kept in cotton ; you are not in the whirlwind, so that I am perfectly easy with regard to your quiet ; but then I am by no means so with respect to that heaviness, and those heats you are troubled with ; and then again that pain you endure, with no north-easterly winds, or extraordinary fatigue to occasion it. I could wish to have a little further information on this particular, which is of so much importance to me : the care that is taken of you, cannot be wholly owing to precaution, nor without good reason. I wish you may be sincere in your resolution, no longer to destroy yourself with your writing desk : confirm me, I beseech you, in my good opinion of you, and never again write me such long letters, since Montgobert acquits herself so well of the office ; and, as I have already told you, may also save you the trouble of dictating. I could wish, too, she would now and then add a word or two of her own, relative to the state of your health.

I have at last received a letter from my son, who is at Nantes. He was but twenty days on the road ; he travelled only ninety leagues from Britany in the month of January, to spend the holidays, and without one

spark of love in his heart! I have written to him to take care how he tells this story to others, and that, to save his reputation, he ought to allege some flame, real or pretended; otherwise he would appear more a Breton than the Bretons themselves. I have also entreated him not to stay at Nantes, on account of my affairs; they are not a plausible excuse, and I should be sorry to pass for so silly or so covetous a being, as to prefer things, which are of no consequence, to the necessity of his paying his attendance at court on such an occasion as the present. He seems to me to be under some embarrassment; but he will return soon enough to set out with M. de Chaulnes: mark my goodness, I have secured him a place in his carriage.

In reality, I had forgotten little de Genoz; I leave the care of such antediluvians to such folks as you and your worthy brother. Had it not been for the presence of Mademoiselle, I should have renounced mademoiselle d'Eperan: I said that day, as indeed I do every day of my life, the foolish things you are pleased to call pretty, which is saying as much as one well can to qualify them; you wish what I said the other day to madame de Richelieu, to be distinguished from this class*, to which I readily consent, as it bears so great a resemblance of what M. de Grignan would have said; and I thought so at the time. Such things come from him naturally, whenever he speaks or writes; and it is owing to this that his letters are for months the ornament of every pocket. Madame de Coulanges had hers still yesterday, and the watch; is not this droll? But, my dear, think not so much of what you are, or ought to be, as to forget that it is your duty to be here sometimes. It is not only your native country, but M.

* See Letter January 5.

de Grignan's likewise : and I should pass my time heavily indeed, did I not hope to have the pleasure of seeing you both here this year. M. de Rennes * reserves your apartment for you, though he will allow us plenty of time to repair it. You have no obligation to me for his society, it is not one : he is an admirable inmate ; he is as light as a feather, and so are all his attendants ; he talks little, and is seldom to be seen ; he is continually trotting up and down, and has no aversion to being alone in his study ; his company is much sought after, and he has not the least resemblance to the late M. de Mans†. In short, his value is so great, that, if I could wish for any one who was not yourself, it must be just such a one as he is. He has often begged me to present his compliments to you, and to tell you, that, however satisfied he is with his present situation, he has too great a regard for me, not to wish to be obliged to relinquish it to you.

Madame de Soubise is no longer talked of ; she even seems forgotten already. In fact, there are a thousand other things to employ our attention at present ; and I am foolish enough myself to venture on some other topic. For these two days it has been, as in the affair of Mademoiselle and M. de Lauzun : a constant bustle, sending to learn the news, paying visits from house to house, to learn what is passing ; curiosity is on the stretch ; and this is what has come out, in expectation of the remainder‡.

* Jean Baptiste de Beaumanoir, bishop of Rennes, who at this time lodged in madame de Grignan's apartments, in the hotel de la Car-navalet.

† Philibert Emanuel de Beaumanoir, bishop of Mans, died July 16, 1671. He was first-cousin to M. de Rennes.

‡ La Voisin, La Vigoreux, and a priest of the name of Le Sage, known at Paris as conjurers and casters of nativities, added to this jug-

M. de Luxembourg was at Saint Germain on Wednesday ; the king frowned on him more than usual : he was told there was a warrant issued to apprehend him : he asked to be permitted to speak to the king ; you may conjecture what was said. The king told him, that if he were innocent, he had nothing to do but to throw himself voluntarily into prison, and that he had appointed such upright judges to make inquiry into affairs of this kind ; that he left every thing to them. M. de Luxembourg immediately took coach, and went to father de la Chaise ; mesdames de Lavardin and de Mouri met him as they were coming here, in a very melancholy mood, in the Rue Saint Honoré : after passing an hour at the convent of the Jesuits, he repaired to the Bastile, and delivered to Barsemeaux * the order he

glery, the secret practice of poisons, which they denominated *succession powder*. They did not fail to accuse those who applied to them for one thing, of having had recourse to them for another. It is thus marshal de Luxembourg was exposed, by his intendant Bonard, for having made some extravagant exorcism with Le Sage, for the purpose of recovering his lost papers. The vindictive Louvois seized the opportunity to ruin, or, at least, to torment him.

Besides the persons here named, madame de Polignac was decreed to be imprisoned, and madame de la Ferté, as well as the countess du Roure, to be personally summoned.

The countess de Soissons was accused of having poisoned her husband ; madame d'Alluie, her father-in-law ; madame de Tingry, her children ; madame de Polignac, a valet who was in possession of her secret ; and this secret was, that she wished to give the king a charm, to make herself beloved by him.

The king gave the duchess de Foix a note, written by her to La Voisin, expressed in these terms : " The more I rub, the less they project." He required an explanation. It alluded to a receipt to increase the size of the bosom. She informed La Voisin that her drug was ineffectual.

It may be supposed that La Voisin had many of these secrets for the use of ladies.

* Governor of the Bastile.

brought from Saint Germain. He was at first shown into a tolerably handsome chamber. Madame de Meckelbourg * came there to visit him, and was almost drowned in tears. About an hour after she left him, an order came to confine him in one of those horrible places in the towers, of which the windows are closed with iron bars, so as scarcely to admit the light of day, and to suffer no one to see him. This, my child, is ample subject for reflection: think of the brilliant fortune of such a man, raised to the honour of commanding in chief the king's armies, and then figure to yourself what his feelings must be on hearing those grating bolts shut upon him, and, if it were possible for him to sleep, what his thoughts must be when he awakes! No one thinks there has been any poison in his affair. This is a misfortune that seems to obliterate every other.

Madame de Tingres is summoned to give evidence on the trial. The countess de Soissons could not endure the thoughts of a prison; she has been allowed time to make her escape, if she really is guilty. She was playing at basset on the Wednesday, when M. de Bouillon came in; he begged her to step with him into the closet, where he told her she must either leave France, or go to the Bastille: she was not long in determining what to do. She immediately called the marchioness d'Allure from the card-table, and they have never appeared since. When the hour of supper came, they were told the countess supped in town; the whole company broke up, thinking something very extraordinary had happened. In the mean time, parcels are packed up, with money, jewels, &c. the male servants have grey liveries, and eight horses are put to the carriage.

* Sister of M. de Luxembourg, formerly madame de Chatillon, mentioned in a note to the Letter of December 20, 1669. Vol. I.

She made the marchioness d'Alluie, who they say was unwilling to go, sit behind, on the same side with her, and two female servants in the front. She told her people not to be uneasy on her account, that she was innocent, but that some vile women * had taken pleasure in implicating her; she wept, called on madame de Carignan, and left Paris at three in the morning. It is said she is gone to Namur; you may be sure nobody wants to follow her. She will, notwithstanding, be tried in her absence, if it be only to clear her reputation to the world: there is a great deal of detraction in what La Voisin says. It is believed the duke de Villeroy † is very much concerned at it; he keeps his room, and sees nobody. Perhaps I may be able to tell you more before I seal my letter.

Madame de Vibraye has fallen into the old train of devotion: God, as you well remarked, would not suffer her to pass her whole life in the company of her enemies. Madame de Buri turns her talking-mill with very great address. If the princess is to be seen at Paris, madame de Vins wishes me to accompany her when she goes there. Pomenars has been cut for the stone; did I not tell you so? I have seen him; it is pleasant to hear him talk of the poisons; one is almost tempted to say to him, "Is it possible this crime alone should be unknown to you?" Volonne gives his opinion, without any hesitation, and wonders how any one could hold a correspondence with these *vile women*. The queen of Spain is, in a manner, as much confined as M. de Luxembourg. Madame de Villars wrote to madame de Coulanges the other day, that were it not for

* La Voisin and her associates in their witchcrafts, &c.

† Francis Neufville, afterwards marshal of France. He had been the lover, and was the intimate friend, of the countess de Soissons.

her love to M. de Villars, she would not have consented to pass the winter at Madrid. She gives madame de Coulanges many pleasant and entertaining narratives, as she thinks they will go farther*. I am overjoyed to have the pleasure of perusing her letters, without the trouble of answering them. Madame de Vins thinks as I do. M. de Pomponne is gone to breathe the air of Pomponne, where he means to stay three days; he has received all, and given up all; so that affair is finished. It really pains me to hear him always asking, What news? He is as much a stranger to what is passing, as one living on the banks of the Marne; he is in the right to make his mind as happy as he can. Mine, as well as the abbé's, was much affected at what you wrote with your own hand; you did not feel it, my dear child, but it was impossible to read it without tears. Good heavens! you pronounce yourself as good for nothing, as an encumbrance to the earth; to one who sees no object in existence but you! Think of the consequences your talking thus may produce. I beseech you, never henceforth to say any ill of your humour. Your heart and mind are too perfect to suffer such light clouds to be perceived: be a little more tender of truth and justice, as well as of the sole object of my vows and prayers. I shall think myself really dead till I have the gratification of seeing you.

* Madame de Coulanges, passing her life at court, with madame de Maintenon, and even with mademoiselle de Fontanges, could easily report these agreeable narratives to the king.

LETTER DXCVII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Wednesday, January 31, 1680.

It is impossible for me to see your hand-writing without emotion. I well know the injury writing does you; and though you say the most affectionate and most amiable things to me possible, I regret exceedingly the purchase of that pleasure at the expense of your lungs; I know you are still far from well. You tell me the weather is extremely mild, and that you do not fatigue yourself, and that you write less than usual: whence, then, proceeds this obstinacy in your disorder? You are dumb on that subject, and Montgobert has the cruelty, though she has the pen in her hand, not to say a single word about it. Good God! what is the rest of the world to me, and what pleasure can I receive from the account of all the rejoicings at Aix, when I find you are obliged to go to bed at eight in the evening? "But," say you, "do you then wish me to sit up late and fatigue myself?" No, my dearest; God forbid I should be capable of forming so depraved a wish; but when you were here, you were not wholly incapable of relishing the sweets of society. I have at length seen M. de Gordes; he told me, with great sincerity, that you were in a very feeble state in the boat, and that you were much better at Aix: but then, with the same simplicity, he assures me, that the air of Provence is too keen, too piercing, and too drying, in your present condition. When we are in health, nothing is amiss; but when the lungs are attacked, and we are thin and delicate, like you, we run the risk of putting it out of our power ever to recover. Tell me no more that

the delicacy of your lungs draws our ages nearer together: God forbid, that the order established by Providence, so agreeable to nature and reason, and at the same time so dear to me, should be deranged with respect to us.

I must resume the article of news, which I always suffer to rest awhile, when I get upon the subject of your health. M. de Luxembourg has been two days without eating; he asked for several Jesuits, but has been refused every one of them: he asked to have the Lives of the Saints, and it has been given him; you will see he is at a loss *to which of the saints he shall devote himself*. He was interrogated for four hours on the Friday or Saturday, I cannot recollect which; after that his mind appeared much relieved, and he ate some supper. It is thought he would have done better to have made his innocence take the field, and to have left word he would return, when his proper judges * should think fit to summon him. He has done a real injury to the dukedom, in acknowledging the chamber; but he was willing to yield a blind obedience to the commands of his majesty. M. de Cessac has followed the example of the countess. Mesdames de Bouillon and de Tingry were interrogated on Monday at the chamber of the arsenal. Their noble families attended them to the gate: there is yet no appearance of blackness in the follies which have been laid to their charge, nor even so much as a shade of grey. Should nothing farther be discovered, this is a scandal which might very well have been spared, especially to families of their high quality. Marshal de Villeroy † says, these gentlemen

* The parliament of Paris.

† Nicholas de Neuville, marshal duke de Villeroy, father to the last marshal of that name.

and ladies do not believe in God, though they believe in the devil. In reality, a great many ridiculous things are related, respecting the private transactions of these abominable women. Madame de la Ferté, who is so properly named, went out of *cômplaisance* (to La Voisin's) with the countess (de Soissons), but did not go up stairs; M. de Langres accompanied madame de la Ferté; this is very black; the circumstance has given her a pleasure not often enjoyed by her, which is, to hear it said that she is innocent*. The duchess de Bouillon went to ask La Voisin for a small dose of poison, to kill an old tiresome husband she had, and a nostrum to marry a young man she loved. This young man was M. de Vendome, who led her by one hand, and M. de Bouillon, her husband, by the other. When a *Mancine*† is guilty only of a folly like this, information is given of it; and these witches explain it seriously, and shock all Europe with a mere trifle. The countess de Soissons asked, whether she could not recover a lover who had deserted her? this lover was a great prince; and it is asserted, that she declared, unless he returned to her, she would make him repent his ingratitude: this is understood to be the king, and every thing is of importance that has relation to him: but let us look to the sequel; if she has committed any greater crime, she has not mentioned it to these baggages. One of our friends says, there is an elder branch of the poison, to which they never refer, as it is not a native of France. What we have here, are younger branches only, without shoes to their feet. La T*** § gives us to under-

† The Amours des Gaules have rendered her gallantries notorious, which may be called by a term less mild.

‡ Madame de Bouillon, as well as the countess de Soissons, was the niece of cardinal Mazarin. It will be seen that she was innocent.

§ Madame de Tingry being named twice in this letter and the prece-

stand, there is something of greater consequence behind, as she was school-mistress to the novices. She says, "I admire the world; it really believes I have had children by M. de Luxembourg." Alas! God knows whether she has or not: the present prevailing opinion, however, is in favour of the innocence of the persons denounced, and a universal horror for the defamers; to-morrow it may be the reverse. You well know the nature of these general opinions; I shall give you a faithful account of them; it is the only subject of conversation here: indeed there is scarcely an example of such a scandal in any court in christendom. It is said, La Voisin put all the infants, whose abortion she had procured, into an oven; and madame de Coulanges, as you may suppose, when speaking of La T***, says, *it was for her the oven was heating.*

I had a long chat yesterday with M. de la Rochefoucault, on a subject we have already discussed. There is nothing to oblige you to write; but he entreats you to believe, that what could give him the highest gratification in the world would be, to have it in his power to contribute to your changing the place of your residence, should an opportunity offer. I never saw so obliging or so amiable a man.

What I am going to tell you, I have heard from good authority. Madame de Bouillon entered the chamber like a queen, sat down on a chair placed there on purpose for her, and, instead of answering to the first question that was asked her, demanded, that what she should say might be taken down in writing; it was, "that her sole reason for coming there was from the respect she bore to the king's command, and not in obedience to the chamber, whose authority she in no

ding one, is it not probable that she is intended by the initial T.? She was related to M. de Luxembourg.

wise acknowledged, as she would not derogate from the privileges of the dukedom." Every word was written down. When she took off her glove, she discovered a very beautiful hand. Her answers were very sincere; those respecting her age not excepted. "Do you know La Vigoureux?" "No." "Do you know La Voisin?" "Yes." "What reason had you to desire the death of your husband?" "Desire the death of my husband! ask him whether he believes a syllable of it. He gave me his hand to the very gate." "But what was your reason for so often visiting La Voisin?" "Because I wanted to see those Sibyls she promised me I should see; a company which certainly well deserved all this noise and scrutiny." "Did you not show that woman a bag of money?" She answered, "I did not, and for more reasons than one;" and then with a smiling, and at the same time a disdainful air, "Well, gentlemen, have you done with me?" "Yes, madam." She rose, and, as she was going out, said loud enough to be heard, "I really could not have believed that men of sense would have asked so many foolish questions." She was received by all her friends and relations with adoration, she was so pretty, easy, natural, firm, unconcerned, and tranquil†.

La T*** was by no means so cheerful. M. de Luxembourg is perfectly disconcerted: he is neither a man, nor half a man, nor even a woman, unless it be a foolish woman. "Shut this window; light a fire; give me some chocolate; give me that book; I have abandoned

† To render this picture complete, it is necessary to cite another stroke related by Voltaire. "La Reynie, one of the presidents of this chamber, was so ill-advised as to ask the duchess de Bouillon if she had seen the devil. She replied, that she saw him at that moment: that he was very ugly, and very dirty, and was disguised as a counsellor of state. The questioner proceeded no farther.

God, and God has abandoned me." This is the conduct he displayed before Baisemeaux and his commissaries, with a countenance pale as death. With nothing better than this to carry to the Bastile, he had better have gained time, as the king, with infinite goodness, had put into his power to do; till the very moment before he committed himself: but we must of necessity have recourse to Providence, in spite of our efforts to the contrary; it was by no means natural to behave as he has done, weak as he appears to be†. I was misinformed; madame de Meckelbourg has not seen him: and La T***, who came with him from St. Germain, never intended, any more than himself, to give madame de Meckelbourg the least notice of it, though he had time enough to have done it, if he had been so inclined; but La T*** kept every one from seeing him, and watched him so closely, that not a soul came to him except herself. I have been to see this Meckelbourg at the nunnery of the Holy Sacrament, where she has retired. She is in great affliction, and complains loudly of La T***, whom she blames for all her brother's misfortunes. I made your compliments to her, by way of anticipation, and assured her you would be extremely grieved to hear of her ill-fortune; she expressed great regard for you. One might, at this time, do almost what one pleased at Paris; it would not be noticed. Madame de Soubise is entirely forgotten; and as for the sufferings of poor Bertillac, I am really ignorant what has become of

† Madame de Séigné seems to have adopted, at this moment, the ridiculous reports spread abroad, in regard to M. de Luxembourg: but is it to be credited, that a soul like his was capable of such weakness as was laid to his charge? And does it not rather exhibit the common conduct of envy and malignity, which, in the life-time of men of the first order, are incessantly endeavouring to tarnish the lustre of their reputation?

her. However, I cannot help thinking of my poor Adhemar, poor child! how I pity her being jealous! do you, my child, pity her too. I am quite concerned for her.

LETTER DXCVIII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Friday, February 2, 1680.

If I were to yield as easily to the temptation of hearing you talk in your letters, as you do to the love of talking, it would be a serious affair: I should then amuse myself with the little boy's battle, which you relate in four lines, in the most entertaining manner possible: you are not clever, you say, at narration; but I assert that no one can abridge a story so well. I can easily see you were diverted with the boy, who thinks he has fought like a hero. The good sense of the little marquis pleases me highly. You describe uncommonly well, the different sentiments of the mesdemoiselles de Grignan on the occasion. What you say of Paulina is incomparable, as well as the excuse you make, of the delicacy of your constitution, to get rid of the pleasures of the carnival. I shall never forget the haste you were in to amuse yourself, with all possible expedition, before the carnival, swallowing Shrovetide like a medicine, that you might quickly enjoy the repose of Lent. Your qualified persons, whether *singular* or *plural*, are a great relief to you, and act their parts to a miracle. To hear you explain all this, would be droll enough; but still, my child, I banish the temptation, by the thought that nothing can be more injurious to you than writing: I therefore entreat you, never henceforth to amuse yourself with writing me so long a letter as the last, unless

you wish to reduce mine to half a page ; and this with an intention of obliging me to break off all correspondence with you. I embrace M. de Grignan, since, at length, with so much difficulty and address, you have forced him to forgive me : and I conjure him, as he values our reconciliation, to see that he shorten the lines I may receive from you. It appears to me, that you have deceived him, as well as Montgobert, in the voluminousness of your letters : I affectionately entreat you to beware of doing so for the future.

Your reasonings respecting madame de Saint Geran, are exceedingly well-timed. Madame de Buri has been settled these three weeks in the place you imagined madame de St. Geran was in possession of. The dauphiness is to have only one lady of honour, and the ladies of the wardrobe ; these are all. They set out a week ago, with her household, for Schélestat. The maids of honour are also gone ; they are all of high birth, but have no extraordinary beauty ; Laval, the Birons, Tonnerre, Rambure, and the good Montchevreuil, are to bring up the rear. The sixth place is left vacant for some German lady, if the dauphiness should think proper to bring one with her. The king treats the princess de Conti with an affection that it is quite delightful to witness : when she comes, he kisses and embraces her, talks to her, and gives full scope to his fondness ; she is his daughter, and he calls her by no other name ; you may draw your own inferences. *She is still the model of the Graces*, and grows very fast ; she is not superintendent*, nor has she had a pension of a hundred thousand crowns ; I have these two fibs on my conscience. You should read the gazettes ; they are very good, and not at all flattering or exaggerated as heretofore : but

* Of the queen's household.

what folly it is to talk of any thing but madame Voisin and M. le Sage !

FROM MONSIEUR DE SÉVIGNÉ.

It is not M. le Sage who takes the pen, as you see. Here I am again, my pretty little sister, fixed at Paris, at my dear mama's elbow, whom I have not yet been accused of having wished to poison ; and this, I assure you, as times go, is no small degree of merit. I have still the same sentiments with regard to my little sister ; I therefore ardently wish the return of your health, and when that is obtained, we will wish for another return as speedily as possible.

FROM MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ.

THIS good-for-nothing de Sévigné is at length arrived. I intended to have scolded him, and indeed, I had reason to do so. I had even prepared a speech on purpose, which I had divided into seventeen heads, like de Vassé's harangue ; but I know not how it happened, all is jumbled together, and there is such a mixture of the serious and comic, that I know not what to make of it. *Tout père frappe à côté*, (fathers strike obliquely), as the song says. The public still continues to blame the judges for their imprudent conduct in giving rise to so much noise, and bringing such disgrace on so many distinguished names, upon so slight a foundation. M. de Bouillon asked leave of the king to print the interrogatories put to his wife, that he might send them into Italy, and other parts of Europe, where credit might possibly be given to the report of his wife being guilty of poisoning. Madame de la Ferté, overjoyed to be found innocent for once in her life, absolutely insisted on being put to the test ; and though she was told she need not come unless she chose, she was determined to

appear, and her case was still more trifling than that of madame de Bouillon. Feuquieres and madame de Roure's amounted to no more than the most venial peccadilloes : but the most disagreeable circumstance for the prisoners, is, that the chamber will not sit for three weeks, nor take any new information, nor cause those residing at a distance, against whom informations have been filed, to be brought before them : as for instance, Polignac, who has been summoned to appear, and the countess de Soissons. In short, here are three weeks of repose or despair ; however, the countess de Soissons gains ground, and does well : there is nothing like publishing, in the face of the world, our guilt or innocence*. I have been at infinite pains to learn the fate of poor Bertillac, and am at length informed she is dead.

LETTER DXCIX.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Wednesday, February 7, 1680.

So, my child, you sometimes play at chess. For my own part, I am an enthusiast in this game, and would give the world I could learn to play it like my son, or you. It is the finest and most rational game of any ; chance has nothing to do with it ; we blame or applaud ourselves, and our success depends upon our skill. Corbinelli would fain make me believe I shall

* The countess de Soissons offered to return, provided she was neither put into the Bastile, nor placed at Vincennes. The condition was rejected. She ended by retiring to Brussels, where she died at the close of 1708, "when," says Voltaire, "her son, prince Eugene, avenged her by so many victories, and triumphed over Lewis XIV." It will be seen farther on, that she was accused of a new crime.

acquire it : he says, I have some ideas and schemes of my own ; but I cannot see three or four moves forward into the game. I assure you I shall be much ashamed and mortified, if I do not, at least, attain mediocrity. Every one played it at Pomponne, when I was last there ; men, women, and children ; and whilst the master of the house was beating M. de Chaulnes, he met with a strange *check* at Saint Germain. Madame de Vins spent part of the afternoon here yesterday, when we talked a great deal of this disagreeable adventure. The last affair of the courier is inexcusable † ; it was a very unnatural lethargy. Vexations of this nature are easily revived, when we allow ourselves the liberty of thinking and speaking of them without reserve.

I and all the ladies of your acquaintance were at the service performed for poor Bertillac‡. It is beyond all doubt that Caderousse was the occasion of her death ; she was stabbed, as it were, with a dagger, at his conduct. He is in the country. For my part, I look upon it as a second S****, one for murder, and the other for witchcraft. In short, the planet of crimes seems to have the ascendant.

They will fall to work again in the chamber § sooner than was expected ; it is said many persons will be confronted. We want something to rouse us ; for we are asleep, and the great noise has ceased till another opportunity. Nothing is now said of M. de Luxembourg : I really wonder how things pass so quickly ; it is, indeed, a torrent, that hurries every thing along with it. We are still promised, however, some curious scenes.

There has been a sad melancholy Monday, which

† See Letter December 6.

‡ See Letter January 24.

§ The chamber for trying the affair of the poisoning.

you will easily comprehend. M. de Pomponne is at length gone to court. He dreaded this very much : you may guess what his thoughts were on the road, and when he beheld the court at Saint Germain, and received the compliments of the courtiers who surrounded him. He was quite overcome ; and when he entered the chamber where the king was waiting for him, what could he say, or how begin ? The king assured him he had always been satisfied of his fidelity and his services ; that he was perfectly at ease, as to the state secrets he was acquainted with ; and that he would give him and his family proofs of his regard. M. de Pomponne could not help shedding tears, when he mentioned the misfortune he had to incur his displeasure : he added, that, with respect to his family, he left it entirely to his majesty's goodness ; that his only grief was the being removed from the service of a master to whom he was attached, as well by inclination as duty ; that it was next to impossible not to feel so heavy a loss in all its severity ; that this cut him to the quick, and caused him to betray those marks of weakness, which, he hoped, his majesty would forgive. The king told him he was himself affected at them, that they proceeded from goodness of heart, and that he ought not to be offended. The whole discourse turned on this, and M. de Pomponne came away with eyes somewhat red, and the looks of a man who had not merited his misfortune. He told me all this yesterday evening ; he could have wished to have been more firm, but he could not get the better of his emotion. This is the only occasion in which he has appeared too much affected ; though it might be said he had not paid his court badly, if to pay court had been his object. He will soon recover his philosophy, and in the mean time an affair of some importance is concluded ; these are

renewals which we cannot help feeling with him. Madame de Vins has been at Saint Germain; good God, what a difference! She had attentions enough paid her; but to reflect, that that had been her home, where she has not now a corner to shelter her head in! I felt what she underwent in that journey. Adieu, my beloved child; I am always impatient to hear from you, but pray write only two words to me; renounce long letters for ever, and spare me: it is horrible to think, that those who love you, and who are beloved by you, should be the ruin of your health.

LETTER DC.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Friday, February 9, 1680.

I SEE you are in the midst of the pleasures of the carnival, my beautiful dear; you give little *private* suppers to eighteen or twenty ladies: I am well acquainted with your mode of life, and the heavy expenses you incur at Aix; but yet, amidst all this bustle, I fancy you contrive to have plenty of rest. We say sometimes, I will have pleasure for my money; but I think I hear you say, I will have rest for mine: take your rest then, and enjoy, at least, this advantage. I cannot help being surprised that a minuet-tune does not tempt you sometimes; what! not a single step! no motion of the shoulders! quite insensible! it is not to be believed, it is unnatural; I never yet knew you sit still on these occasions, and, were I to draw such inferences as I commonly do, I should imagine you much worse than you say you are.

There was, yesterday evening, an enchanting entertainment at the hotel de Condé. The princess of Conti

named one of the duke's daughters, with the prince de la Roche-sur-Yon. First was the christening, then the dinner; but what a dinner! then a play, but what a play! interspersed with fine pieces of music, and the best opera-dancers. A theatre built by the fairies; such perspectives, orange-trees loaded with fruits and flowers, festoons, pilasters, scenes, and other decorations: in short, the whole expense of the evening cost no less than two thousand louis-d'ors, all for the sake of the pretty princess.

The opera (of Proserpine) is superior to every other. The chevalier tells me he has sent you several of the airs, and that he saw a gentleman * who said he had sent you the words; I dare say you will like it. There is a scene in it †, between Mercury and Ceres, which requires no interpreter to be understood; it must have been approved, since it has been performed; but you will judge for yourself.

The poisoning affair is grown quite flat; nothing new is said of it. The report is, that there will be no more blood spilt; you will make your own reflections, as we do. The abbé Colbert is made coadjutor of Rouen. They talk of a journey into Flanders. No one knows what this assembling of the forces portends.

Friar Ange has raised marshal de Bellefend from the dead; he has cured his lungs, that were incurable. Madame de Coudanges and I have been to visit the grand-master‡, who has been almost at death's door for a fortnight past; his gout had returned: add to this an oppression, which made every one suppose he was at his last gasp; cold sweats, light-headedness; in short, he was as ill as it was possible to be. The physicians

* Quinault.

† See the second scene of the first act.

‡ The duke de Lude.

could give him no relief; he sent for friar Ange, who has cured him, and brought him from the very gates of death, by the gentlest and most agreeable medicines; the oppression went off, the gout fell back into his knees and feet, and he is now out of danger.

Adieu, my dear child! I still lead the same life, either in the suburbs, or with these good widows; sometimes here, sometimes eating chicken with madame de Coulanges; but always pleased to think I am gliding down the stream with old Time, and hastening the happy moment when I shall see you again.

LETTER DCI.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Wednesday, February 14, 1680.

I THINK you extremely fortunate in the society of madame du Janet, who is come on purpose for you; this is a friendship that pleases me. I am fully persuaded her whole employment will be to take care of your health; pray embrace her for me. You give yourself very little concern about the vanities of this world; I think I see you constantly retiring and going to bed, leaving the rest to sing and dance by themselves: you will have rest for your money, as I told you the other day.

Montgobert has related to me, very pleasantly, the manœuvres of the beautiful Iris, and the jealousy of the count; I dare say he will often see the moon with this beauty; he has revenged himself for this time, by a very pretty song. Montgobert made me laugh at her respect for M. de Grignan. She had written, that he came to the ball *la gueule enfarinée* (full of expecta-

tion): she recollected herself, erased the *gucule*, and wrote the *bouche*, so that it is now *la bouche enfurinée*.

The gendarmes are quite bewildered. My son goes to Flanders, instead of meeting the dauphiness. The army is assembling, they say, to take Charlemont *. We know nothing certain, except that the officers are going to the army, and that in a month there will be an army of fifty thousand infantry. The chevalier's regiment is not one of them.

The chamber of the arsenal is again sitting. One of the committee, whose name is not mentioned, said to M. de la Reynie; "But, sir, as far as I see, we are only employed about sorceries and witchcraft, such diabolical proceedings, of which the parliament of Paris never takes cognisance. Our commission is, to try the crime of poisoning; how comes it that we enquire into any thing else?" La Reynie was surprised, and said, "Sir, we have secret orders." "Be so good, sir," replied the other, "as to communicate those orders to us, and we will obey them as well as you; but, as we are without your knowledge, I think I say nothing contrary to reason and justice, in thus expressing myself." I

* One of the conditions of the treaty with Spain was, that France, with other places that were given up to her, should have either Dinant or Charlemont. But the emperor, whose consent was necessary, having preferred keeping Dinant, France was put in possession of Charlemont. There was but one military demonstration. It was upon this acquisition of Charlemont, M. de Coulanges wrote some verses ending with,

Louis est un enfant gâté;

On lui laisse tout faire.

"Lewis is a spoiled child; he is suffered to do what he pleases."

This complaisance throughout Europe cost dear to France. The king, habituated thus to have his own way, adopted three fatal resolutions: he revoked the edict of Nantes, protected James II., and accepted the testament of the king of Spain.

am of opinion you will not blame this man's honesty, though he does not wish to be known. There are so many persons of worth belonging to this chamber, that you will find it difficult to guess who he is.

The little prince de Léon was baptised yesterday at Saint Gervais by a bishop of Britany ; M. de Rennes stood godfather, as representing the states of Britany ; the duchess was godmother. The rest were all Britany folks : the governor of Britany, the lieutenant-general of Britany, the treasurer of Britany, the deputies of Britany, several lords of Britany, the presidents of Britany, father and son : in short, had there been a dance, they would have danced Britany dances ; and have eaten Britany butter, had it been a meagre day. I assure you, my son feels all the secret power which attracts the Bretons into their country ; he is returned perfectly enchanted with it. He has begun, for the first time in his life, to admire Tonquedec, and to think him worthy of imitation : it would be like stopping the course of the Rhone, to oppose this torrent, which carries him so far, as even to dispose him to sell his place : he said this to Gourville, and several others, before he mentioned it to me. He assigns very good reasons ; he looks forward ; he fears the disgusts which may be occasioned by means of M. de la Trousse ; he is sorry for those who are appointed to the gendarmerie, and has no wish to be ruined : the sum of the matter is, that by thus discovering his inmost heart, he would reduce us to the necessity of saying, Certainly, he is perfectly in the right to sell his place. I cannot reproach myself with concealing what my duty obliged me to say on this strange resolution, in which I expressed myself with the freedom I sometimes indulge myself in. I desired him to wait for at least some pretext, some shadow of dissatisfaction ; in short, to stay for something

that may serve to keep his real thoughts undiscovered : but it was to no purpose ; for all M. de la Garde and I have been able to do, is to beg he will not interfere. We are overjoyed at his absence, as it may be a means of preventing his doing injury to his affairs, by decrying his own goods. I told him it was very unfortunate to value commissions merely from whim and caprice ; by his liking and disliking : to pay an exorbitant price for the ensigncy, because he was wild for it ; to rate the sub-lieutenancy at nothing, because he is disgusted with it. Is it thus we would buy and sell, unless we were fools, ignorant of business, and wished to ruin ourselves ? Adieu, my beloved child ; be not uneasy on this account ; let us adore the dispensations of Providence, whose kindness sends us no greater subject of complaint : I shall still possess my mind in liberty, for I shall still be as much yours as ever ; this will make no change in me : quite the contrary, quite the contrary.

All those who are to have the honour to attend the dauphiness, are by this time at Schélestat ; madame de Maintenon and the bishop of Condom are separated from the company ; they are gone to meet the princess, as far as they can go ; that is, perhaps, three or four days' journey. This is a very agreeable and marked distinction ; should the dauphiness take it into her head to judge of all the rest of the company by this sample, she will be egregiously deceived ; it is, in fact, no small advantage to be in the first form. There was a sort of first form at madame de la Fayette's the other day ; you were placed on it without the smallest hesitation. Corbinelli paid the rest a fine compliment, by saying, that, in his opinion, there was no such thing as pretending to reason with any woman but you. It is a good patrimony, my dear child, to have so good and

solid an understanding, as you have; but a very bad one, as you say, to have all our good sense locked up in the Bastile; one might pass one's time a great deal better in the cell of a mad-house. Adieu! though I leave you, my thoughts are still occupied with you, and with so much affection, with so much warmth, and a heart so often afflicted with your illness and your absence, that I am at a loss to say whether such a cell would not be the best place for me.

M. de Luxembourg has been twice taken to the castle of Vincennes, to be confronted: the true state of his case is not yet known.

LETTER DCII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Friday, Feb. 16, 1680.

I AM still, my dear child, and with great justice, wholly occupied about your health: I have sent Montgobert the result of a consultation I had the other day with friar Ange. I thought she might have it in her power to seize the proper time to prevail with you to take the remedy he recommends much better than my letter could have done. I shall expect Montgobert's answer, or rather yours, if milk does not agree with you. You have probably been kept too low for it, or your blood may be still too much heated to unite with the coldness of the milk; for, had it been proper for you, you would have been well ere this. Friar Ange was perfectly sensible of the effect of this opposition; it was like water thrown upon too hot a skin. This is what Fagon says, and what you have experienced: it is your business to judge, whether your blood be still in the same degree of heat; since, in that case, friar Ange's remedies,

which are mild, strengthening, and refreshing, might be of service in fitting you for the milk, and possibly cure you, as they have cured marshal de Bellefond, the queen of Poland, and a thousand others. They are very easy and pleasant to take; and if, unfortunately, they should do you no service, you may rest assured they can do you no harm. Du Chêne has still an aversion to coffee; the friar thinks there is no harm in it. It is true, madame de Sabliere * took tea with her milk; she told me so the other day; but it was from choice of taste, for she found coffee to be equally good. The physician you esteem, and who, for that very reason, I dare say, deserves it, advises coffee. Ah! my child, what is left for me to say on this subject? or how can I determine whether I am right or wrong? We very often blame the most beneficial thing in the world, and make choice of what is the most pernicious, and, at best, grope in the dark. I have this accusation to make to myself, that I recommended coffee to you when it was far from being proper for you. Can it be necessary towards a remedy's having a proper effect, that it be taken as a medicine? Caderousse is constantly praising coffee; it makes some people fat, others thin: what contrarieties! I do not see how it is possible to say any thing certain of what is attended with such opposite effects; follow, therefore, my dear child, your own inclination, and consult with your worthy physician: I shall, however, beg leave to ask him a question or two; which is, how it happens, since your lungs are not attacked, that you have such a continual heat and oppression on the same side; why you are so chilly; and why so thin, parti-

* The same who took La Fontaine to her house, kept him there twenty years, and gave him the name of her *Fablier* (fabulist). Her husband, who died the same year, has left some wretty madrigals.

cularly about the chest. Now, this it is that makes me fear there is something more the matter with you than merely the ill state of your blood. Let me have an answer to these particulars through madame du Janet, for as to Montgobert, she will have other affairs on her hands, besides being your amanuensis. You speak of my health; I am perfectly well: I took two of my pills with a small quantity of the water, during the decrease of the moon. I have accustomed myself to take every morning a glass or two of linseed-tea; by this means, I shall have no more nephritic complaints: France owes the preservation of M. de Colbert to this tea. I practise no deception with regard to you; I express myself but in one way to you; let me therefore beg you to use the same sincerity towards me, and inform me of the true state of your health; indeed, every thing else is indifferent to me.

Madame de Bouillon has gloried so much in the answers she made the judges, that she has procured herself the favour of a *lettre de cachet*, enjoining her to take a trip to Kerac, at the foot of the Pyrenées; and accordingly she set out yesterday in great affliction. There is ample subject for reflection in her departure: if she is innocent, she is a great loser in being refused the pleasure of triumphing; if she is guilty, she is happy in shunning the infamy of being confronted, and, possibly, convicted. Her whole family have conducted her, like another *Psyche*, half a day's journey out of town. She is now exactly in the same situation with good queen Margaret* in days of yore. Let us consider the four sisters, and what a wandering planet

* Margaret, queen of Navarre, sister of Francis I., who, by telling very free stories, had the talent or the good fortune to pass for being very chaste herself.

governs their fates : one sent into Spain, another into England, a third into Flanders, and a fourth into the remotest parts of Guienne ! The countess de Soissons is outlawed. M. d'Alluie is sent into banishment to Amboise, for having talked too freely. Nothing is said of M. de Luxembourg, though he has been confronted ; the judges are silent on the affair. I am now going to pay your compliments to madame de Meckelbourg, who weeps and vexes exceedingly.

Madame de Vins is still as amiable as ever, and loves you dearly : this increases her regard for me, which I do not fail to cultivate and improve. M. de Pomponne is become one of us again, as formerly ; he is going to the suburbs, and they begin to talk of the times of the hotel de Nevers, with all the reflections so naturally arising from the changes which have happened of late. My son is still as full of the idea of selling as ever, and I am as much bent as ever on preventing it : this affair does not float in his head as other things do ; it has taken deep root, and I plainly perceive the soil of Brittany at the bottom of it. I have but too fully explained myself on this subject : he is persuaded I have told you of it ; he expects your disapprobation, but has no fear of its shaking the firmness of his resolutions : for my part, as I cannot possibly do better, I beg him only to wait till he has something like a pretext from M. de la Trousse : I will write you what turn his affairs take. Adieu, my dearest child, adieu.

LETTER DCIII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Wednesday, Feb. 21, 1680.

I CANNOT possibly recompense you better for the good news you have sent me in regard to your health, than by informing you that the abbé de Grignan is made bishop of Evreux. Methinks I hear you say to yourself, "Evreux! What sort of place is Evreux?" I will tell you: Evreux is one of the prettiest little towns in Normandy, about twenty leagues from Paris, and sixteen from St. Germain: it belongs to the duke de Bouillon; the revenues of the see are worth twenty thousand livres a year; the house is very handsome, the church extremely beautiful, and the country-house the most pleasantly situated of any in France. This diocese joins to that of Rouen, where the abbé Colbert is coadjutor. The splendid house of the archbishop of Rouen, called *Gaillon*, which every body talks so much of, is in the diocese of Evreux. In short, it is a most delightful place: for my own part, I do not hesitate to declare that I prefer it to Marseilles; for, though the income of that bishopric may be more considerable, yet the difference is swallowed up in the expenses of travelling. All the well-wishers to the Grignan family join with me in thinking, that nothing could be more desirable for our abbé. The affair was managed thus: there is an old bishop of Evreux still living*, who is upwards of fourscore; he was formerly bishop of Pui; you have doubtless seen him at St. Mary's; it is he

* Henry de Maurepas-du-Tour.

who wrote my grandmother's life *. This good man is superannuated, and he desired his majesty to give him leave to resign in favour of some other person; at the same time mentioning the names of several young abbés not very agreeable to the king; who thereupon sent him word, not to give himself any trouble about the matter, but to send his resignation in form, and that he would take care to fill up his place with such a person as he could have no objection to; which person proved no other than your brother-in-law. The conditions upon which he enters upon this place are, to pay the old man a pension of five or six thousand livres a year during his life, after which, the king charges the benefice with a pension of a thousand crowns, to be paid to the chevalier de Grignan; a very pretty remembrance, till something better offers. The chevalier is persuaded it will make the old man live, like an antediluvian, to the age of eight or nine hundred years.

The two brothers were both here, and set out together for St. Germain, where they still remain. I make no doubt that their acknowledgements have been graciously received, and that they will return in raptures. For my part, I am so vulgar as to be in raptures myself. You will be informed of this much better by themselves, but I am so interested in it, that I could not refrain from the pleasure of entering into particulars: it is so natural.

I have some thoughts of employing this summer in making, what may possibly be, my last jaunt into Britany. The good abbé thinks it necessary, and has no intention of returning again. You may however

* Jeanne-Francoise Fremiot, baroness of Chantal, foundress of the order of the Visitation.

Imagine, that I shall return, if it be only to have the pleasure of receiving you.

Little Coulanges is delighted with your answer; and as he has no natural antipathy to you, as I have, he would be happy to pass the summer with you. You say it is cruel to be expecting all your friends at Grignan except myself; and I really think it more so than you can possibly do, as I am weak enough to deem it a great pleasure to see those we passionately love. But I am persuaded you will return to Paris this autumn, as you said you would. You will consult your health; it is impossible to pass a winter at Grignan, and it is as bad to live at Aix, on account of the expense occasioned by play and entertainments, which are there unavoidable. In short, the life you lead at that place is a kind of perpetual carnival. In this part of the world we never dream of amusements, and I would not answer that we shall not spend our holidays at Livri.

Poor La Tingry must be very miserable indeed, since even madame de Lesdiguières pities her: I fancy M. de Luxembourg's greatest crime is, having loved her. He is no longer talked of. It is not even known whether or not he is still in the Bastille. Some say he is at Vincennes*. Nothing certainly can be worse than being confined in prison, unless, like that she-devil La Voisin, to be burning, as she is at this moment, at the Place de Grève.

It is said, that the people of Namur and Antwerp, and of several other cities in Flanders, have shut their gates against the countess, crying out, "We want no

* M. de Luxembourg remained fourteen months in prison. He was liberated without any sentence, and appeared at court without the king's mentioning the event to him. He was afterwards seen in the brilliant career of victory, and, what is less common, reducing this species of merit to its just value.

poisoners here!" This is the turn the affair has taken, so that, in future, a Frenchman and a poisoner will be the same thing in foreign countries. It is thought the countess will steer her course for Hamburg. The marquis d'Allaie is gone to meet her, and not to Amboise, as was said.

Eight or ten courtiers have been appointed, with a salary of 6000 francs each, to be close attendants on the dauphin's person; two are to be in waiting every day. The chevalier will tell you their names. I think I heard messieurs de Chiverni, Dangeau, Clermont, and Crussol, mentioned. I do not yet know who the others are, nor indeed am I sure of these. M. de Montausier* said to the dauphin, "Monseigneur, if you are an honest man, you will love me; if you are not, you will hate me, and I shall easily console myself."

Corbinelli will give you an account of what relates to your common father (Descartes). He sends a thousand compliments to you and M. de Grignan, and so does La Mousse. Mesdames de Lavardin, de Mouci, d'Huxelles, and twenty others, whose names I have forgotten, have been here to congratulate me, and to desire me to inform you how much they interest themselves in the good fortune that has befallen your family.

I have just heard, that the fine episcopal palace of Evreux is only seven leagues from St. Germain; it is called Condé; a name we are none of us strangers to: but the worst is, that the old bishop, about two years ago, cut down some beautiful groves of trees that were the delight and ornament of the whole country. So you see there is no pleasure without its alloy. The good abbé is charmed with the country-house near St.

* The duke de Montausier at that time quitted the office of governor to the dauphin.

Germain, and says that Providence has given you a second *Livri*.

Since I wrote the above, I have seen the Grignans, and have heard from them, with extreme pleasure, a minute account of their journey to St. Germain. They wrote the same to you, it seems, last Monday, so that you will know all about it before you receive this. The chevalier de Grignan is spoken of as one of the courtiers who are to wait on the dauphin*.

LETTER DCIV.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Friday, Feb. 23, 1680.

INDEED, my child, this has been a very pretty week for the Grignans; should Providence favour the elder brother in proportion, as it has the younger, we might soon expect to see him in a charming situation. In the mean time, I think it no disagreeable thing to have brothers in such favour. The chevalier had scarcely returned thanks for his pension of a thousand crowns, when he was chosen, out of eight or ten persons of quality and merit, to be an attendant upon the dauphin, with a salary of two thousand crowns; so here are appointments to the value of nine thousand livres a year, in the space of three days. He immediately went back to St. Germain with his second acknowledgements, for it seems he had been appointed in his absence, while he was here in Paris. His personal merit has greatly contributed to this choice: his distinguished reputation, his strict honour and probity, and the regularity of his con-

* These gentlemen had the title of *Mémoires* given them, from a Spanish word.

duct, have been remarked ; and it is the general opinion, that his majesty could not have made a better choice. There are but eight persons named yet, Dangeau, d'Antin, Clermont, Sainte-Maure, Matignon, Chiverni, Florensac, and Grignan*. The last is universally approved. Permit me, then, to pay my compliments of congratulation to M. de Grignan, the coadjutor, and yourself.

My son sets out to-morrow ; he has read the reproaches you make him ; possibly the charms of the court he wishes to leave, and where he has so handsome an establishment, will make him change his opinion. We have prevailed on him not to be in a hurry, but to wait quietly till he meets with the temptation of a greater sum than he gave.

You have given me a specimen of M. de Grignan's joy by my own, in hearing that you are better. As your complaints are no longer continual, I am in great hopes, that, by taking care of yourself, using a milk diet, and giving up writing, you will in the end restore my daughter to me as lovely as ever.

I am charmed with Montgobert's sincerity : had she always written me word you were well, I should never have given credit to her : she has managed the whole business to a miracle, and has won my heart by her candour ; so natural is it for us to love not to be deceived. May Heaven preserve you, my dear, in this prosperous state ! which gives us all such flattering hopes. But to return to the Grignans, for we seem to have forgotten them. Nothing else is talked of here. Nothing but complimenting passes in this house ; one has scarcely done when another begins. I have not

* These were afterwards reduced to six, viz. Mess. Dangeau, d'Antin, Saint-Maure, Chiverni, Florensac, and Grignan.

seen either of them since the chevalier has been made a lady of honour, as M. de Rochefoucault calls it. He will write you all the news much better than I can possibly do. It is supposed that madame de Soubise will not be one of the travelling party. See how long my letter is growing!—Well, I will only mention La Voisin's affair, and conclude.

She was not burnt on Wednesday, as I wrote you word; the sentence was not executed till yesterday. She knew her fate on the Monday, a very extraordinary circumstance! In the evening, she said to those who guarded her, "What! no medianoche!" She ate with them at midnight out of whim, for it was no fast-day, drank plentifully of wine, and sung several drinking songs. On Monday she received the question ordinary and extraordinary. She had now dined, and slept nearly eight hours. She was confronted while under the torture with mesdames de Dreux and Le Féron, and several more. Her answers have not yet transpired, but every one expects to hear strange things. She supped in the evening, and, lacerated and disjointed as she was, gave a loose to her excess, to the disgust of every one present. They endeavoured to make her sensible of her ill conduct, and that she would be much better employed in thinking of God, and singing devout hymns, than such songs; upon which she sung a psalm or two in mockery, and then fell asleep. Wednesday was spent in the like confronting, drinking, and singing; she absolutely refused to let a confessor come near her. In short, on the Thursday, that is, yesterday, they denied her all kinds of food, excepting only a little broth, of which she complained greatly, seeming to be apprehensive that she should not have strength to carry her through the business of the day.

She came from Vincennes to Paris in a coach; she

seemed embarrassed, and as if she wished to conceal what she felt. They would have had her confess, but she would not hear of it. At five o'clock she was bound and set on the sledge, dressed in white, with a taper in her hand. She was extremely red in the face, and was seen to push away the confessor and the crucifix with great violence. Madame de Chaulnes, madame de Sully, the countess (de Fiesque), myself, and several others, saw her pass by the hôtel de Sully. When she came to the church of Notre-Dame, she refused to pronounce the amende-honorable; and at the Grève, she struggled with all her might to prevent their taking her out of the sledge: she was, however, dragged out by main force, and made to sit down on the pile, to which she was bound by iron chains, and then covered over with straw; she swore prodigiously, and pushed away the straw five or six times; but at length the fire increased, she sunk out of sight, and her ashes are by this time floating in the air. This is the end of madame Voisin, celebrated for her crimes and her impiety. One of the judges, to whom my son happened to mention his surprise at persons' being burnt alive, in a slow fire, made answer, "My dear sir, there are some indulgences granted to the women in favour of their sex." "How, pray sir? are they strangled?" "No, sir, they are covered with faggots, and the executioner tears off their heads with iron hooks." So you see, my child, this is not so dreadful as we have been told it was. How do you find yourself after this little story? It made my blood run cold in my veins. One of the wretches that were hanged the other day had begged her life of M. Louvois, promising to make considerable discoveries, but was refused. "Very well," replied she, "I promise you no torments shall make me speak." Upon this she was put to the torture, and so severely, that

she was very near dying under it; as one of her accomplices had just done. A physician stood by to feel her pulse all the while—but mum for that. This woman then suffered all this without uttering a word. At the place of execution, just before she was placed on the pile, she cried out that she had something to say; when silence being commanded, she presented herself heroically, and exclaimed, “Gentlemen, pray be so good as to present my respects to M. de Louvois, and tell him that I have kept my word. Come, friend; make an end of your work.” She was dispatched immediately. What say you to this kind of heroism? I could tell you a thousand such stories, were it possible to crowd them all into a letter.

I have given you this as a sample of the agreeable topics that form our present conversations, while you are carousing, dancing, and feasting. I should be very glad to hear some particulars of your entertainments. I know you do nothing else during the holidays, and you are in the right to make hay while the sun shines, for Lent is at hand, which will put an end to all.

LETTER DCV.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Wednesday, Feb. 22, 1680.

WAS not I right, my child, in saying that the numerous good things which had fallen to the lot of the Grignans in the short space of four days, would contribute to bring you back to this country? It is not to be believed, that, after providing so well for the younger brothers, the elder should be forgotten. I am persuaded his turn

will come, though it came not last year; which was not like this, the year of gifts and benefits.

I sent you a piece of false intelligence, upon the credit of its being believed by madame de Coulanges; I mean that madame de Maintenon was to be sent before the rest of the company to meet the dauphiness. What nonsense! there is not a word of truth in it, though it was talked of in several respectable places. I must also contradict the account of the vacations at the court of the Arsenal; for they have been sitting these four days. I am vexed at having deceived you, and set you arguing upon a false scent.

M. de la Rochefoucault told me yesterday, that the countess de Soissons had been obliged to steal out of church at Brussels; for some wags had contrived a sort of dance, of a number of cats tied together, or rather, out of mere malice, had raised so horrible a caterwauling and squeaking, crying at the same time that it was devils and witches following her, that she was obliged to quit the place, and give way to this folly, which shows no very favourable disposition in the inhabitants towards her. The subject of M. de Luxembourg is quite at an end. La Voisin made no new discoveries. She gave her soul very gaily to the devil, in the midst of the flames; indeed she only passed from one fire to another. But let us talk of the journey.

The abbé de Lanion, who is returned from Bavaria, says, the dauphiness is really very lovely, that her mind gives grace to her person, that she is a *virtuosa*, speaks three or four different languages, and is a great deal handsomer than her picture by de Troy. His majesty set out on Monday to meet this princess. Early in the morning there appeared in the court-yard at St. Germain a very handsome new carriage, adorned with

emblems and ciphers, and drawn by eight horses ; several other chariots, and waggons, fourteen mules, a great number of attendants in grey liveries : in the back part of the carriage was the beauty of the court *, with the Adrets only, a number of coaches following for their women. In all probability the evenings will be spent in visits to this person. This is a new change of the scene, and such as we little thought of, when you and I passed the evening at madame de Flamaren's.

Madame de Villars writes madame de Coulanges a thousand pretty things, and all the world flocks to her to learn the news † ; the accounts are very entertaining to many ; M. de la Rochefoucault is very curious about them : madame de Vins and I catch all we can. We are not at a loss to know why my good friend is made the intelligencer ; but then it is blended with so much regard and affection, that one would think the Spanish climate had wrought an alteration in her constitution, and that she had even forgotten to desire that we might be made partakers of the contents of her letters. The queen of Spain is handsome and plump, and the king amorous and jealous, without knowing of whom or of what. The bull-fights are frightful things ; two of the grandees had like to have lost their lives at one of them lately, their horses were killed under them ; this entertainment is frequently stained with blood. Yet these are the diversions of a Christian kingdom ; ours, thank Heaven ! are of a gentler nature, and much more easily attained.

You are a good creature to think of Corbinelli. He has triumphed, and has redoubled his acknowledgments

* Mademoiselle de Fontanges.

† See the letter of Nov. 8, 1679.

to Providence. I know no person whose meaning and intentions are more truly Christian than his; he has entered into all the spirit of rejoicing on the good fortune of the Grignan family. He is sometimes so witty, that I often wish you had him sometimes to amuse you: he has put his affairs into the hands of the lieutenant of the police, who, I believe, will in a few days give a definitive sentence in his favour. He has studied the law, and judges all causes, without being asked. I did not wish him to be at the assemblies of the wits, because I know there are shaggy dogs there who bear admirably all that is said in honour of your father Descartes. We learn, from your example, not to maintain bad causes, and generously to overwhelm our old friends: this is the country of policy, as well as the country of objects: ideas, it is true, make no long stay there. You say truly; there is no one but I who spends his life in being occupied with the presence and absence of the person beloved.

You tell me of chess what I have often thought before. In my opinion, there could not have been contrived a better expedient to humble pride than this game, which at once sets before our view the narrowness and insignificance of the human mind. I think it would be of real utility to any one fond of such reflections. But then, on the other hand, the foresight, the penetration, the address in defending ourselves, as well as in attacking our adversary, the success attending the right management of the game, is so pleasing, and affords so much inward satisfaction, that it may at the same time nourish our pride, and swell our self-sufficiency. I am still far from being cured of this passion, and therefore want to be farther convinced of my own weakness.

All the world is at present occupied with the king's

journey. Not a word of M. de Luxembourg; it seems as if he were no longer in existence; the whirlwind hurries us along with it, so that we have not time to dwell upon any single object; in short, we have too much business on our hands.

The king has received several letters from the ladies, who all assert that the dauphiness is much handsomer than has been reported; they all seem to be highly pleased with her. She is daughter and grand-daughter to two princesses, who are very affectionate; I do not know if that is to be the humour here; we shall see. In passing through Strasburg she received the compliments of the deputies of that city; to whom she said, "Gentlemen, I beg you will speak to me in French, I have quite forgotten my German." She seems far from regretting her country, and is quite a French woman. She has written letters to the dauphin in different styles, according as she was nearer being his wife, which discover great good sense: it will be the prince's business to put the last hand to this, and erase from her mind all remembrance of the country she leaves with so much joy. Madame de Maintenon writes the king word that her person is very agreeable, her shape, her neck, arms, and hands, beautifully turned; and that, with a desire to say whatever she thinks will please, she possesses a great share of sense and dignity.

Farewell, my beloved child! I must not fatigue you with reading any more than writing: I hope your cold is better, and that it passed lightly over that delicate constitution. I embrace the dear little marquis: I think you judge extremely well of his conduct: to be bold on proper occasions, and exact in the discharge of duty, when intrusted with an important situation, is what constitutes distinguished merit, whether in peace

or war. I will venture to predict, this young man will one day make an extraordinary figure: I can look into futurity, and fancy I see him.

Monsieur and madame de Pomponne, and madame de Vins, set out yesterday for Pomponne till the return of the court. Madame de Vins seemed to me tolerably well pleased at passing the carnival in the country, and in such company. They had been to take their leave at St. Germain; the king behaved extremely civilly to M. de Pomponne, and spoke to him just as usual; but then to mingle with the crowd, after having seen the door fly open at his approach, is a circumstance which still pierces him to the heart. These attentions, which however he is resolved not to neglect on proper occasions, are very painful to him. But he will soon recover his fortitude in the country: and though the evils are of such a nature as not to be cured even by time, fortitude will enable him to support them. They are both satisfied with you and me.

The trees at Condé, the cutting down of which had so grieved me, have, it seems, only served to make one of the finest roads imaginable to one of the pleasantest houses in France.

LETTER DCVI.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Friday, March 1, 1688.

I must talk to you a little of the opera; I have not yet seen it, nor am I very curious to run after such diversions: but they tell me it is very fine; several, who were there, were so obliging as to think of you and me. I did not mention it to you, because, as they made me

Ceres, and you *Proserpine*, it follows, of course, that M. de Grignan must be *Pluto*; and I was frightened to death lest he should make his chorus answer me,

Une mère vaut-elle un epoux * ?

It was this I dreaded; for, as to the verse before that,

Pluton aime mieux que *Ceres* †,

I should not have troubled myself about it. But, this apart, I make no doubt, my dear, but that we shall come together again, and I live but in that hope. Your Elysian fields are doubtless very pleasant; you enjoy the carnival in its utmost extent; here we have only the shadow of it. The whole court is upon the road; numbers are gone into the country, and we had determined to do so too, thinking the sun would have proved faithful to the king: but there is so strange an alteration in the weather, that I do not know what will become of us.

They write from Villars-Coterets, that their time passed very agreeably there; though I do not find that the visits to the chariot with grey liveries ‡ were public; but the regard is not the less for that. A present was made of ten thousand louis-d'ors in stepping into the carriage, and a service of silver gilt: liberality is great on both sides, and they distribute what they receive. But you will know more of the court-news than any one, for you have at present a resident there, who will inform you of all that passes. It is not your brother, for he is at his quarters. We shall endeavour to settle his affairs upon the best footing we can for him,

* Is a mother to be compared to a husband?

† *Ceres* in love must yield to *Pluto*.

‡ See the preceding Letter.

because they happen to be my own at the same time; as for him, all he desires is, like the wolf in the fable*, to enjoy his liberty, and be independent. This, with the reserve of three thousand louis-d'ors, would make him completely happy: I have not, however, been in so violent a hurry; I have spared no pains, and even straitened myself to make his fortune; but I should be sorry to do so, to send him after all to Quimper. I must take care of my own affairs, and think this is the time to do it honourably.

The other day, a gentleman of Britany was stabbed, as he was going into a ball-room, by two men dressed in women's clothes, one of whom held him, while the other very deliberately struck him to the heart. Young d'Haroüis, who happened to arrive at the time, was extremely surprised and shocked to see this person, whom he knew extremely well, lying upon the ground, in full dress, bloody and dead; the account of it struck my imagination very forcibly. That wretched son of madame de Valançai's was taken ill and died just as he was on the point of commencing a law-suit against all the family: every body is rejoiced at his death: it seldom happens, I think, that a man has the civility to die when all the world wishes it. The grand-master (M. du Lude) is recovering by degrees at St. Germain: our alarm on account of his illness was according to the respective dates of our acquaintance, that is to say, mine very great, madame de Coulanges' somewhat more, and others' infinitely greater than hers. But this was carried off so well, and we concealed our sorrow with so much address, that no one could have perceived it; and to hide it still more effectually, we submitted to the insupportable martyrdom of living at court, always dress-

* La Fontaine's fable of the Wolf and the Dog.

ed, and always charming. In short, it was as difficult to be discovered as the devotions of a certain person whom you mentioned so humourously to madame de L'Estrange. It is whispered, however, that poor Karmen had nocturnal weepings, that she beat her head against the wall, and proved herself a most faithful friend, by sounding the trumpet of affliction. We were there three times, for I do not wish to conceal these visits from you; however, I have quite lost the remembrance of what is past*.

Adieu, my best love! hasten to your amusements. We shall be in no such a hurry if we go to Livri. Say what you please of your suppers: I have a very good opinion of them, for I know what they are.

LETTER DCVII.

TO THE SAME.

Livri, Ash Wednesday, March 6, 1680.

WE have spent Shrove-tide here; the fine weather on Saturday determined us: I have a notion you would have been pleased with our plan, as it somewhat resembles the good taste you display in suiting your ribbands and other parts of your dress to each other, and softening your scarlets with a mixture of brown. In like manner, we have lowered the lustre of our carnival with a dash of the filemot of these woods; we had the finest weather imaginable; the gardens appeared ex-

* This is a jest on the pretended and mistaken idea that M. de Lude was her lover. Menage ranks him as one of the four noted for their witticisms, who were all Angevins. The three others were Bauxin, Barzai, and the prince de Guéméné.

tremely neat, and the prospect was very fine; add to this, the melody of the birds, who already began to declare the appearance of spring, which I assure you we thought a thousand times more musical than the cries of Paris. I thought much of you, my dear child; good God, with what fervour do I love you! I begin to think you dearer to me than ever.

We are all here, the good abbé of the abbey, the bishop of Rennes, the abbé du Pile, M. de Coulanges, and your humble servant. I wished Corbinelli to have been of the party, but he remained at Paris to be present at the wedding of one of M. Mandate's sons; he would have filled his place here very well.

Our time does not hang at all heavily upon our hands: we walk, chat, play at chess, or at cards occasionally, read some short letters of Pascal's, some plays, and the Princess of Cleves, which I make our parsons read, who are highly delighted with it; we keep a good house; young Coulanges has his song-book with him: in short, we are as merry as possible.

Your letter of the 24th was brought to me here, for all my thoughts are employed about you; but, notwithstanding these dear letters, I am not without my apprehensions and disquietudes. We return to Paris this evening, where I shall close my packet. Let me entreat you, my dear child, not to begin writing again—nothing can be so injurious to you: let me enjoy the pleasure of thinking, that, since I can do you no good, I at least do you no harm.

Heavens! how strange it is that you do not mention a single word of the good fortune of your two brothers-in-law! or rather, how mortifying, that seventeen days should slide away, since it has rained gold from heaven upon them, and I do not yet know how you relish the

shower! We, who are all in raptures at it, begin to think no more of it than a thing we had been accustomed to.

I fancy our *d'Evreux* is gone to his charming bishopric, for the *handsome abbé* is a name that is now to be disposed of. This bishopric is worth twenty-two thousand livres a year, though I called it only twenty. I likewise thought that Condé had been only ten leagues from St. Germain; it seems it is fifteen: but there has been no harm done; the park is one of the most beautiful spots in the universe; a river, which runs through the midst of it, forms the finest piece of water that can be seen: there is stag-hunting: it was formerly the residence of cardinal du Perron *. I hope you will some day favour us with a word or two on this subject, as well as on the chevalier's place, who, in two days, had an income of nine thousand livres a year dropped upon him from the clouds: I cannot yet help thinking it is all a dream.

You speak with great affection and good sense of my son. You are perfectly right in taking it for granted that I have said every thing to him that is possible to be said, in regard to his extravagant desire of selling his commission. I have unquestionable evidences of this folly; but at length I intend to think, for the first time in my life, of my own interest. He has set me the example; I will take his burthen off my shoulders, which weighed lightly when he liked it himself, but which now weighs more than forty thousand crowns. I am determined to be pleased with this relief, which I should never have thought of but for him: on the contrary, I was delighted with his situation: but I change as he changes; I also like my liberty as well as he does.

* Bishop of Evreux before he was made archbishop of Sens.

We are going, perhaps for the last time in our lives, to set our estates upon the best footing we can, eat up our provisions, sleep away four or five months, and then let every one shift for himself. I think, my dearest child, of the bustle you have been in for these two or three days, whilst we have been employed so differently. I have a notion that you want to be at Grignan; but take my advice, and let this month and a half of the next pass first, for even then the winter will hardly have left it. I fancy you have other motives than jealousy, though Montgobert writes me word, in your own letter, that you are jealous without knowing it, and that M. de Grignan is in love without believing it: what an excellent secretary! I conjure you to give yourself no more uneasiness about your brother's conduct, than you do about your husband's amours. Your brother insists strongly that he has no thoughts of becoming a Breton. He is an artful creature; we are, however, upon very good terms with each other. Let us leave the disposal of every thing to Providence; if it was not for this reliance, I should be unhappy indeed.

I have it from very good authority, that there has been a ball at Villars-Coterets, at which there were masks. Mademoiselle de Fontanges was there like a star of the first magnitude, and was superbly dressed by the hand of madame de Montespan. The latter danced most divinely; Fontanges would also dance a minuet she had not practised for a long time; in the attempt, her feet seemed to have forgotten what they were doing. The corant was no better; in short, she made but one curtesy. I shall soon inform you of what I learn at Paris.

I must contradict what I said about La Voisin being damned, for her confessor has declared that she pronounced the words *Jesu! Maria!* in the midst of the

flames ; so that, for what we know, she may be a saint. You see how careful I am, not to mislead you by false reports.

I am now at Paris, my dearest child ; it is exactly seven in the evening. We were so unwilling to leave the pleasant abbey, that we did not set out till it was late : you know how we used to amuse ourselves with chatting upon the little bridge. The weather was the finest possible. Madame de Coulanges informs me that she has no news to send me yet. To-day his majesty will see his daughter-in-law for the first time.

LETTER DCVIII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Wednesday, March 18, 1680.

I BELIEVE your joy to be extremely well founded ; you have examined it thoroughly, and viewed it in the best light. Nothing can be better explained than M. de Montausier's wisdom, which is divided into six parts*. You also think, with justice, that the chevalier has been agreeably distinguished on this occasion : his majesty spoke highly of his merit ; the future seems as fair as the present. The court is now no longer *terra incognita* to him ; it is his proper sphere, where he may appear consistently with his duty and his interest, secure of meeting with a favourable reception. There is nothing to prevent your blending the interest of the little marquis with those noble and exalted sentiments of your friendship for him. But it is beyond my conception, why you should both consider yourselves as out of the world, and without title to the good graces or bounties of his

* The six menins of the dauphin, who succeeded the governor.

majesty. Why consider yourselves as persons laid aside? How old are you? Let me ask you both that question. One is of the same age as M. de la Trousse, and the other as madame de Coëtquen, who still reckons herself in the number of the young. Whence then bury yourselves, like Baucis and Philemon? Are your names foreign, and unknown at court? Have you not both all the requisites to present yourselves worthily to the king? Has he not already shown an inclination to serve your family? Are not his past favours so many pledges of what you may expect from his munificence? How comes it, then, that you never think of yourselves, and that you consider any good fortune that may happen to the little marquis at such an immense distance? I know not whether it be owing to the small share I have in this distant prospect, or that I am not led by the humours of grandmothers, who forget their own children, to play at bo-peep with their grandchildren; but I own you have stopped me short, and I cannot digest the strange way of thinking you both seem to have adopted. I do not find you at all more reasonable than your brother, nor your cabbages preferable to his. I would endeavour, therefore, my dear children, if I were in your place, to put myself in the way of sounding the dispositions of Providence, as to coming in for a share of the good fortune which has befallen your younger brothers, and pass my time in the company of the living: for no one in his senses would abandon the idea of making court to Fortune, where there are so many solid reasons to entertain hopes of succeeding, and when she begins to smile upon us so graciously. These, my dear child, are my sentiments, and those of your friends, let me therefore entreat you not to oppose them; and be assured, if you do, that you can never after, with any degree of propriety, laugh at your brother. I leave

you to digest these reflections at your leisure; and request you both to consult your looking-glasses, and see if you look like courtiers of the last reign.

Now I mention courtiers, I must tell you some news. The dauphiness is universally admired; the king was extremely impatient to know what she was like, and sent Sanguin to take a view of her, who is a man of strict veracity, and incapable of flattery. "Sire," said he, "after the first glance, you will be satisfied." This was very happily expressed, for there is something in her nose and forehead rather too low in proportion to the rest of her face, and which has a bad effect at first sight; but they say her manners are so graceful, her hands and arms so beautiful, her figure so fine, her neck and teeth so white, her hair so luxuriant, and that she has so much good sense and good-nature, affectionate without being disgusting, affable without lessening her dignity, in short, possesses so many fascinating qualities, that this first glance must be pardoned. I am of opinion this princess will revive the days of devotion amongst us; but, be she ever so devout, she must be content to shorten the *angelus**: can you fancy you hear the bells at St. Germain? She would needs confess on the eve of her marriage, but could find no Jesuit who understood German. Father La Chaise was caught; he thought to have had it all his own way; this occasioned some little confusion†; however, it will soon be decided, for the princess does not yield the

* A prayer to which the people in Roman-catholic countries are called twice a day by the ringing of bells.

† The priest who confessed her, was a canon of Liege who was there by accident. This man had not even the ecclesiastical habit. He endeavoured to get himself excused from this honour, saying he had never confessed any one, except a soldier who was wounded in the trenches. He did as well as he could, and the dauphiness also.

palms to the queen in frequent communion : father Bourdaloue will not have her soul in his keeping.

M. de la Rochefoucault has been, and still continues, much indisposed ; he is rather better to-day : but to tell you the truth, there was great reason to fear the worst ; he had a high fever, accompanied with oppression, and the gout had flown to his head. It was a question whether they should call in the Englishman, the physicians, and friar Ange ; he has chosen his godfather, and friar Ange is to give him the finishing stroke, if Heaven has ordained that he is to die. I shall present your letter to M. de Marsillac, who came here post, with my own hand, if it be true that all goes well ; for you know it is necessary to time things properly. I shall give madame de la Fayette the note ; she was here yesterday, in great affliction. I consider you happy in having got rid of the carnival, which you celebrated in such pomp at Aix. I am charmed that you approve the way in which we passed ours in the woods of Livri. Your letter to your brother is excellent ; I should have been glad you had done me the credit of thinking I had said the same to him as you have written, and that I was no less shocked than yourself at his very extraordinary determination. The fear of being ruined, which he makes his pretext, is only a cloak to his desire of becoming a Breton ; he never had any fears of this kind till he became acquainted with Tonquedes. I am aware how much he degrades himself ; but let me thank heaven that this is not the keenest pang I could feel.

You counterbalance well our tragic stories with your own. I cannot help admiring the heart of the son, who fell dead on seeing his poor father hanged ; this does honour to children in general : parents have long given proofs of their tenderness. The jealous mad lover of

Arles, who kills every one he meets with, is a fine pattern for our lovers in this part of the world, who have not time to be so much in love; the variety of objects occasions so great a dissipation, that it at once diverts and diminishes the passion. I remember another dismal story of this kind that happened formerly at Frejus; your climate differs widely from ours.

Corbinelli has been giving me a lesson, which has perfectly explained what you call being a stranger to absence: I find I am precisely of your way of thinking, by maintaining the contrary. I am really very much mortified that I cannot come and pursue my studies with you; but we must go to Britany, that we may say we have been there.

LETTER DCIX.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Friday, March 15, 1680.

I AM much afraid we shall lose M. de la Rochefoucault; his fever still continues; he received the sacrament yesterday: the tranquillity of his mind is really worthy of admiration. He has settled all affairs of conscience, and his disorder and the prospect of approaching dissolution give him no concern; you would think it was his neighbour at the point of death: he hears the physicians dispute without being the least affected by it, and the contentions of the Englishman and friar Ange, without saying a word. I return to this verse:

Trop au-dessus de lui, pour y prêter l'esprit *.

He would not see madame de la Fayette yesterday, on account of her tears, and because he was to receive the sacrament; but he sent about noon to know how she

* Too superior to himself, to pay any attention to it.

was. Believe me, my child, he has not passed his life in making useless reflections; he has rendered death so familiar, that the prospect is neither new nor terrific to him. M. de Marsillac arrived the day before yesterday at midnight, so overwhelmed with grief, that I do not think even you could feel more for me. It was a long time before he could compose himself; at length he came in, when he found M. de Rochefoucault sitting in his chair, with an air very little different from that he usually wore. As M. de Marsillac is the only one of his children who may be said to enjoy his friendship, it was thought he would be himself affected at seeing him; but of this, however, there was not the smallest appearance, and he even did not name his illness to him. His son, unable to contain himself any longer, withdrew to give vent to his grief; when, after a great deal of altercation, Gourville being against, and Langlade for the Englishman, each of them supported by different parties in the family, and the two Esculapian chiefs keeping up all the warmth of their natural animosity, M. de Marsillac decided in favour of the Englishman, and yesterday, at four in the afternoon, M. de la Rochefoucault took his medicines, and at eight repeated them again. As there is no getting admittance at present, it is difficult to learn the truth: however, I have been told, that after having been last night within an instant of giving up the ghost, through the struggle between the medicine and the gouty humour, he had so considerable an evacuation, that though the fever has not yet abated, there is reason to hope for a favourable issue. I am convinced in my own mind that he will recover; though M. de Marsillac does not yet venture to admit a ray of hope. I can compare him, in his affections and grief, to no one but yourself, my dear child, who cannot bear the thoughts of my death. You may well believe that I shall not give him M. de Gri-

gnan's letter at present: it shall go, however, with those that may come afterwards; for I am convinced with Langlade, from whom I learnt all I tell you, that the remedy given will complete the cure.

I want to know how you are, after your journey to Marseilles: I must chide M. de Grignan for taking you with him; I cannot approve of such useless jaunts. Must not you also show Toulon, Hieres, Saint Baume, Saint Maximin, and the fountain of Vaucluse, to the mesdemoiselles de Grignan?

I am almost constantly with madame de la Fayette, who must be totally insensible to the charms of friendship, and the affections of the heart, were she less afflicted than she is. I close this packet at her house, at nine in the evening: she has read your little note; for, in spite of her fears, she has hope enough to be able to read it. M. de la Rochefoucault is still the same; his legs begin to swell, which the Englishman does not like: he seems certain, however, that his medicines will have the desired effect. If this be true, I shall admire the great humanity of the physicians in not tearing him piecemeal, for this will be the ruin of them all; to take the fever out of their hands, is to take the bread out of their mouths. Du Chêne is very easy about the matter, but all the others are stark mad.

LETTER DCX.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Sunday, March 17, 1680.

THOUGH this letter will not go till Wednesday, I cannot help beginning it to-day, to inform you, that M. de la Rochefoucault died last night. I am so much engrossed with this misfortune, and with the extreme af-

surrection of our poor friend *, that I must relieve my mind by communicating the painful event to you.

Yesterday, which was Saturday, the Englishman's medicine had done wonders; all the favourable symptoms of Friday, which I mentioned to you, were increased; his friends began to sing *Te Deum* in their hearts; his lungs were clear, his head free, his fever less, his evacuations such as indicated a salutary crisis: in this state yesterday, at six o'clock in the evening, he relapsed, so as to leave no hope of recovery; his fever redoubled in an instant, with an oppression of the chest and delirium; in a word, he was suffocated by the treacherous gout, and, notwithstanding he had a great degree of strength left even after all his bleeding, it carried him off in less than five hours, so that he expired at midnight in the arms of the bishop of Condom. M. de Marsillac did not leave him a moment; he is under inexpressible affliction: he will find, however, some consolation in the king and the court; and so will the rest of the family, from the place he enjoys: but when will poor madame de la Fayette find again such a friend, such a companion, such kindness, such attention, such confidence, and such consideration for her and her son! She is infirm, confined to her room, and not like other people eternally from home. M. de la Rochefoucault was also of a sedentary disposition; their situation rendered them necessary to each other; so that the mutual confidence and delightful friendship that subsisted between them was unequalled. Think of this, my child, and you will be convinced with me that no one could sustain a greater loss, for this is not to be repaired or obliterated even by time. I have never once quitted this disconsolate friend; she did not mix in the hurry

* Madame de la Fayette.

and confusion of the family, so that she really stood in need of some pity. Madame de Coulanges has likewise acquitted herself very well on this occasion, and we shall continue to discharge our duty even at the hazard of our eyes, which are almost always filled with tears. You see how unluckily your letters came; they have hitherto had no admirers but madame de Coulanges and myself; when the chevalier returns, he may possibly find a proper season for presenting them: mean time you must write one of condolence to M. de Marsillac; he does honour to filial affection, and is a living proof that you are not alone in this respect; but, in fact, I doubt neither of you will meet with many imitators. The melancholy that reigns around me, had awakened all my sensibility, and makes me feel the anguish of separation in all its horrors.

Wednesday, March 20.

Wednesday is come at last. M. de la Rochefoucault is dead, and M. de Marsillac still inconsolable; he confines himself so closely, that he seems determined never to leave the house. The feeble constitution of madame de la Payette very ill supports her extreme grief. Her fever has been increased by it, and it is beyond the power of time to obliterate this dreadful loss. Pray do not fail to write me a line or two for her.

I am under great uneasiness on account of your journey. You will not be carried into Barbary indeed; but it would be very *barbarous* if this fatigue should make you ill. It is melancholy to reflect that we are situated as it were at the opposite extremes of the globe from each other: the thought almost makes me shudder, particularly when I am on the borders of our ocean, in the way to India, as you in that to Africa. I assure you my heart very ill brooks this separation. Did you know

the anguish I feel at the smallest delay in the arrival of your letters, you would then form a tolerably accurate judgement of what I suffer from this your journey.

I have not yet seen our Grignans; they are at present at St. Germain; the chevalier is with his regiment. They would fain have taken me to see the dauphiness, but I am in no hurry. M. de Coulanges has seen her; the first glance, as Sanguin said, is rather against her: but then she is possessed of so much good sense, worth, kindness, and affability, that it is impossible not to admire her: *s'il faut honorer Cybèle, il faut encore plus l'aimer*, (if we honour Cybele, how much more must we love her!). Her sayings are admired by every one for their wit and good sense.

Madame de Maintenon grows daily more in favour. Nothing now but perpetual conversations between her and the king, who bestows all the time he used to spend with madame de Montespan on the dauphiness. You may judge what effect this alteration is likely to produce. The lady of the grey coach* is extraordinarily beautiful; the other day she crossed the ball-room through the dancers, directly to the king, without looking either to the right or to the left: they told her, she did not see the queen, which was indeed the truth. She was shown to a seat, and though there was a little confusion upon the occasion, this mad-cap act was not taken amiss. I have a thousand trifles of this kind in my budget for you;

Your brother is in a very gloomy mood at his garrison; I fear the concurrence of your animal spirits, though of the same blood, will not determine him to think as you do. I thought your period admirable; I know not whether I shall answer it; but no matter, you

* Madame de Fentanges.

guess my meaning. You seem so well pleased with the good fortune of your brothers-in-law, as wholly to forget your own; you conceal yourselves behind a curtain: I have already told you how much such conduct vexes me.

Do you not admire with me the will of Providence, that has deprived me of the gratification of talking of your concerns with M. de la Rochefoucault, who interested himself in them so very obligingly? Having also lost M. de Pomponne, I cannot now be of the smallest utility to you. I never met with so many extraordinary things as have come to pass since your departure. I learn that the young bishop of Evreux is so great a favourite with the old one, that the latter has written to the king to thank him for having given him so worthy a successor.

LETTER DCXI.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Friday, March 22, 1680.

So then! you have at length transported your delicate frame to Marseilles, and M. de Grignan would have it so. I dare say he will carry you to Toulon, and to every place that he thinks worth showing to his sisters: he cannot bear the thought of leaving so agreeable a companion behind him. I cannot blame him: I should very likely do the same.

I am very glad my letters were not sent to Marseilles after you. Good heavens! what use could you have made of them? It would but have added to your fatigue to have read them; and then as to answering them, I

had forbidden it. I should have been very miserable to think of putting you to the trouble of replying to a thousand trifles, which I have myself forgotten. It has grieved me to have given you this trouble, even when you were in health.

I guess how you pass your time at Marseilles; the mesdemoiselles de Grignan must doubtless think it a delightful city; it is certainly superior to any other place; and the view of it from the little hill, as you approach it, has a delightful effect.

You mention a M. de Vivonne as a very different man from the other *. Do not you wonder how people change, and how differently we see things on different occasions? He was then very assiduous in paying you the compliments of his ship! After all, the other humour, though less to his credit, might have been better to you; I could wish you were in as good health as at that time, or at least as frolicsome. I dare say you have been taking a sea-airing; I wish your excessive complaisance may not have proved injurious to you. You were very much surprised at his memory, and at those names of old times, which recalled to your mind the days of your childhood, and your first attempts in dancing.

M. de Pomponne was here yesterday for the greater part of the day; he looked very earnestly at your picture, and mentioned your beauty, your wit, and the evenings at Frêne, so affectionately, that I thought he would never have quitted the subject. He would fain have persuaded me that he had made my eyes red by what he had been saying; and indeed, my child, I be-

* There had been a little misunderstanding the year before between madame de Grignan and M. de Vivonne, general of the galleys.

lieve he was as much affected as myself: and that a momentary recollection of past times disturbed his mind. He was to pay his compliments to his majesty on his return: it is strange to him, who has always been an exile, an ambassador, or a minister of state, to mingle with the crowd of courtiers; and I fancy he would be better pleased not to visit these regions any more: but a pension of twenty thousand livres, and the hope of some rich abbey, make him keep up his attentions. I gave my place in the duchess of Chaulnes's carriage to madame de Vins: the former would fain have had me go, but I had several weighty reasons for refusing.

They say a great many excellent things of the dauphiness; she has good sense, engaging manners, and is entirely French; she seems as much at home at our court, as if she had been born there; she has a way of thinking peculiar to herself, and never conforms her judgment to other persons' sentiments. "Will your highness please to play?" "No, I do not like games." "You will perhaps hunt?" "By no means, I could never find pleasure in that exercise." Well, but what will she do? Why, she converses, is fond of reading both verse and prose, of needle-work and of walking: her chief study seems to be, to please the king: his majesty spends many hours in her apartment, and no longer visits madame de Montespan. This makes the court very dull; for the dauphiness seldom appears, while she can have such good company. The circle is held in her apartment an hour every day; but nobody is admitted to her toilet, or in an evening. The lady *with the cold**, for so you christened her last winter, grows more and more in favour; so that the hatred be-

* Madame de Maintenon.

tween her and the sister of the person who gave you so handsome a reception, is grown to such a height that they no longer see each other.

The king has given the dauphin his directions in a very circumstantial manner, and devised a sort of geography, with which he has extremely amused the court*. As for the prince of Conti, it is really astonishing to hear the ill reports that are spread of him, which begin to embarrass him a little. The young prince de la Roche-sur-Yon (his brother), drives him almost mad; the other day, as the princess of Conti was dancing, he said loud enough to be heard, "Faith, that girl does not dance amiss!" This simple and abrupt speech put the poor elder brother to the blush, and left him without a word to say for himself. You see what trifles I write you; would it not then be extremely odd, if you were to take it into your head to answer them?

The worthy Des Hameaux is *deceased*, as M. de Coulanges says: she desired to have her death announced in the gazette, that her friends abroad might pray for her soul; she would have the great bell at St. Paul's toll for her, and begged a gentleman who lived in the same house with her to abstain from play on the day of her death. She has left but a very slender fortune behind her, having always lived to the height of fashion. M. de Marsillac's affliction is immeasurable; his poor father is now upon his last journey on the road to Verteuil: and as for madame de la Fayette, time, the sovereign cure for the woes of all the rest of the

* This was no doubt very different from the famous *map of love* invented by mademoiselle de Scuderi. But she appeared to have given the idea to the king, who was well acquainted with both.

world, seems only to bring a fresh increase of sorrow to her.

I have not yet seen the Grignans ; they are all separated. My son has written me a long letter, filled as usual with more cogent reasons : I had an inclination to send it you ; but if I had had time to have copied my answer, and have showed you how I have confounded and turned to ridicule all his weighty arguments, it would have afforded you so much amusement, that you would have cared less for this.

LETTER DCXII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Tuesday, March 26, 1680.

You have not been in Barbary then, but are returned back to Aix. I am perfectly sensible of all the fatigue you must have undergone at Marseilles ; you determined to brave the extreme civilities of M. de Vivonne, and these civilities have cost you dear ; I seem to see your spirits bidding defiance to your strength. Are not the mesdemoiselles de Grignan to proceed directly for St. Baume ? These are duties you must perform, as you are in Provence. You appear very desirous to go to Grignan ; I know your reasons, or I should certainly tell you that it is much too early. You will find the north-east wind raging in all its fury, levelling your farms with the ground, and threatening the destruction of your very castle. Do you think it will be strong enough to stand against the various storms that have buffeted it so long ? If it does, it is strong indeed ; but I hope Heaven will protect it against all attacks. But can you, my child, withstand those piercing winds,

that subjugate the most athletic constitutions? I dare not speak of your return; can you intend to pass the winter at Grignan? is it practicable? or would you rather pass it at Aix? Where will M. de Vendôme be?

I often see mademoiselle de Méri; her health, or rather her complaint, is much the same as when you left her; she is not worse, but always on the fret. There is more difficulty in settling her little family, than all the household of Lesdiguières. She had taken one of the pleasantest houses imaginable, and is tired of it. The chevalier is at Paris; I hope I shall see him. I cannot be without one of the Grignan family. I had the pleasure of a conversation with the coadjutor the other day, when a great deal was said on both sides. The chevalier does his duty very well in sending you news. I send you all I hear; when I can get none elsewhere, I apply to M. de Rivaux.

I have just seen the chevalier; he has been with his regiment. We talked much about you and your affairs; he is as vexed as I am, to hear you consider yourself of no importance in the world: good heavens! who is of greater? It is really a dismal thing, my child, to see life, and all the comforts of life, threatened and embroiled in domestic affairs. I shudder to ask you for particulars, and am almost distracted to think that I have it not in my power to be of service to you. Madame de Verneuil spoke to me lately of the increase of her dignity and rank: this is not what I envy her for, but for the happiness of having all her family around her, and of being able to load them with favours. In fact, my dear child, it is in the contemplation of misfortunes superior to our own, that we must learn to bear with our destiny.

I send you a letter from my son; I believe he writes the same to you as he does to me. Never sure was such obstinacy as his. He finds every opinion against him, hears reasons that are unanswerable, and upon this becomes more determined than ever; and the only firm resolution he ever adopted in his life, is precisely the one he ought not to have taken.

La Fare has met with a rude repulse upon offering himself for one of the dauphin's attendants*, for the king cannot endure any person who quits the service; and if my son should lay down his commission, I would advise him to bury himself in the country, rather than flaunt it about here at public places; he is mistaken in all his schemes on this affair.

For my own part, my dearest child, my thoughts are solely taken up with you, and the pleasure of beholding you again. The more I think of M. de Rochefoucault's death, the more desirous I am of passing the remainder of my days with you. Madame de la Fayette appears to have lost all the comforts of life; every hour makes her more sensible of her loss: she rest may be comforted in time; she never will.

M. de Marsillac, now duke of Rochefoucault, has already resumed his functions. The king sent for him; there is no grief which he cannot assuage; his was without bounds, and such violent affliction cannot be durable.

Do you not think the name of Rochefoucault was al-

* La Fare had only quitted the service on account of the harsh refusal of Louvois, to give him a preferment, to which he had an unquestionable right. He says, in his Memoirs, that Louvois, being in love with madame de Rochefort, never forgave him for having paid her attentions.

most as dangerous to take up as that of Aleth*? M. de Marsillac would have let it cool a little, but the public would not suffer it, and the public must be obeyed. You would have me write to M. de Vivonne: good heavens! is he not already overpaid in having seen and entertained you? If I do, it must be to congratulate him on having become more reasonable this year than the last: I had begun a letter to him, but it did not please me, so I laid down the pen, and there the affair rests.

I begin to believe the dauphiness will, at length, have *the honour of seeing me*. Madame de Chaulnes has undertaken it, and I have suffered myself to be prevailed upon. I shall let you know more of this hereafter.

It is a long time since you said any thing to me respecting poor M. de la Rochefoucault, who used so often to talk of you to me. I have your letter to him by me. I shudder whenever I see it. Never was man so sincerely lamented: Gourville has crowned all his former faithful services by his behaviour on this occasion; he is a worthy adorable creature, in this respect, as any I ever met with; you may believe me. But I will dwell no longer on this subject, though indeed I am full of it. It is a public loss, and to us in particular an irretrievable one. Adieu, my dear child! nothing can exceed the love I bear you.

* Nicholas Pavillon, bishop of Aleth, one of the greatest and best prelates of the Gallican church, died December 8, 1677.

LETTER DCXIII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Friday, March 29, 1680.

You had great reason to say, I should hear what kind of life you led in M. de Grignan's absence. It is an extraordinary life indeed! You have *thrown* yourself into a convent; you know it is not into Saint Marie we *throw* ourselves, but into the Carmelites. Well then, you *threw* yourself into a convent, and you slept in a cell. I dare say, too, you ate meat, even though you dined in the refectory. The physician who carried you thither would not permit you to do amiss. You have adopted an excellent plan to get rid of entertainments. You say nothing of little Adhémar; did you not suffer her to peep at you from a corner? Poor child! she was very happy to take advantage of this retreat.

I was yesterday at high court, madame de Chaulnes having at last carried me thither. I saw the dauphiness, whose plainness is far from being disgusting or disagreeable: her face, indeed, ill becomes her, but her good sense suits her admirably! Every thing she says or does, shows a great share of it. She has a penetrating eye, and is extremely quick of apprehension. Her carriage is easy and natural, and she seems no more at a loss, than if she had been born in the Louvre. She pays great attention to the king, but without servility; it is rather the gratitude of a person who is sensible that she has been chosen and distinguished over every other princess of Europe. She has an air of dignity, and at the same time of sweetness. She is very fond of poetry, music, and conversation, and can pass four or five hours alone, in her apartment, without irksomeness. She is astonished

at the pains people take to procure themselves amusements. She has shut her doors against scandal and ridicule. The other day the duchess de la Ferté went to tell her a jest, by way of secret, of the poor princess Marianne*, whose misfortunes are entitled to respect; when the dauphiness said to her with seriousness, "Madam, I have no curiosity."

Madame Richelieu, madame Rochefort, and madame de Maintenon, showed me great civilities, and spoke of you. Madame de Maintenon, by chance, made me a little visit of nearly a quarter of an hour. She told me a thousand things about the dauphiness, and spoke of you a second time, inquired after your health, mentioned your wit and understanding, and your affection for each other, with as much warmth and familiarity as if she had still been in the Rue des Tournelles†. We were thus agreeably employed, when a sudden torrent, burst-

* The princess of Conti. It has been seen in the Letter of the twenty-second of March, by the pleasantries to her husband, of what sort were the miseries for which she was to be pitied. Chaulieu said, in a very neat poem, which the great Condé desired him to write, addressing the Genius of the gardens:

Viens repandre en ces lieux tes dons et ta vertu,
Sur un jeune héros qu'un tendre hymen engage,
Qui malgré son grand courage,
Nous paroît trop abattu.

Thy choicest gifts and virtues hither bring,
And o'er the hero's head profusely fling;
He whom a mild and tender union waits,
And Hymen beckons to the marriage-gates.
Let not his well-known courage fail him now,
And chase the sadness that impends his brow.

The date of 1687, which is given to this piece, in the edition of St. Mark, is evidently false, as the prince de Conti died in 1695.

† A street in Paris where madame de Maintenon lived after the death of her husband Scarron, and before she was introduced at court.

ing in upon us, carried her away from me ; this was occasioned by the entrance of madame de Sourbise, who now returned to court on the very day three months after her quitting it. She came out of the country, where she had lived a perfect recluse, and might truly be said to have been buried alive, till the day of her return to court. She was received very handsomely by the queen and all present ; the king made her a very low bow ; all which she returned with great ease and politeness. The duke talked to me a good deal about M. de la Rochefoucault, the tears all the while trickling down his cheeks. A very affecting scene took place between him and madame de la Fayette on the night he died. I never saw such profusion of tears, nor more tender and unfeigned sorrow. Alas ! my child, every one has spoken to me about this loss but yourself, who still send me letters and compliments for him. This makes me feel the horrors of absence and separation. M. de Marsillac shall receive M. de Grignon's letters at a proper time. Never was grief more lively than his. Madame de la Fayette and he have not yet seen each other ; the rest of the family have been to visit him, which caused a melancholy renewal of his sorrows. The duke, as I told you, spoke to me with great grief on this subject.

In the afternoon we went to hear Bourdaloue, who strikes home without mercy, saying the boldest truths, in vehement declamation against adultery, not caring to whom they apply. We returned highly pleased. Madame de Guenegaud and de Carman were of the party : I assured them, that, except in compliment to the dauphiness, at my age, and without any business to tempt me there, I should take my leave of the court. Madame de Vins, who wanted to know the particulars of my journey, came very snugly to dine with me yes-

terday. She chatted a long time with Corbinelli and La Mousse; the conversation was both sublime and entertaining. Bussy's share of it was far from being the worst. We paid a few visits together, and then parted.

I have seen mademoiselle de Méri, who is quite out of humour with her bargain: she lays all at the abbé's door, who fancied madame de Lassai had given her consent. He makes a good defence, and maintains it to be a very handsome house; this is a new tribulation.

You are not yet in a situation to think about returning. I hope, when you have had a few months' repose at Grignan, you will be of a different mind, and consider that a winter at Grignan is not a thing to be trifled with.

In regard to my son, I find I have courage enough to tell him my sentiments without disguise. I wrote him a letter which I think unanswerable; but the more I enforce my reasons, the more he urges his arguments, and he appears so determined, that I now perfectly understand what is meant by an unconquerable wish. There is a degree of ardour in the desire which animates him, that no prudence can withstand. I cannot accuse myself of having preferred my own interest to his. I wish for nothing but to see him walk in the path I have traced out for him. He is wrong in all his arguments, and far beside the mark: I have endeavoured to set him right by incontestable arguments, corroborated by the opinion of all our friends; and ask him, if he has not some doubts, seeing he is alone in an opinion which every one else disapproves? He answers me always by an obstinate perseverance; so then I am reduced to the last expedient, that of keeping him from making a rash or injurious bargain.

Adieu, my dearest child ! I know not how you are ; I dread your journey, I dread Salon, I dread Grignan ; in short, I dread every thing that wears the smallest appearance of prejudice to your health ; for which reason let me conjure you to write me shorter letters than usual.

LETTER DCXIV.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Wednesday, April 3, 1680.

My dear child, poor M. Fouquet is dead *, and I am affected at the intelligence : I never knew so many friends lost, in a manner, at once, and it overwhelms me with sorrow to see so many dead around me : but what is not around me pierces my heart, and that is the apprehension I suffer from the return of your former disorders ; for though you would conceal it from me, I can perceive your flushings, your heaviness, and shortness of breath. In short, that flattering interval is now over, and what was thought a cure has turned out a mere palliative. I remember your words : that a flame half-quenched is easily revived. The remedies you treasure up against an evil day, and which you reckon infallible, ought to be used immediately. Has M. de Grignan no authority on this occasion ? Is he not alarmed at your situation ? I have seen young Beaumont ; I leave you to guess whether I asked him any questions. When I recollected that he had seen you within a week,

* Gourville affirms, in his Memoirs, that he was liberated before his death, and Voltaire believed it, from the account of his daughter-in-law, madame de Vaux. But madame de Sévigné believed he died at Pignerol, and so did the public. Mademoiselle de Montpensier confirms the general opinion.

he appeared to me the most desirable companion in the world. He said you were not quite so well when he set out, as you had been during the winter. He mentioned your supper and entertainment, which he praised highly; as also the kind attentions both of you and M. de Grignan, and of the care M. de Grignan's daughters took, that you might not be missed when you retired to rest. He said wonders of Pauline and the little marquis; I should never have been the first to put an end to the conversation, but he wanted to go to St. Germain; for, as he said, he had paid me the first visit, even before that which he owed to the king his master. His grandfather had the same place which marshal de Bellefond has had*: he was a very intimate friend of my father's; and instead of seeking out for relations, as is generally the custom, my father chose him, without further ceremony, to stand sponsor to his daughter, so that he is my godfather. I am perfectly acquainted with all the family. I think the grandson handsome, extremely handsome. You did well to say nothing to him about your brother: I have myself mentioned it to no one, except such persons as my son had previously informed of it, in order to find a purchaser.

I conclude you must by this time be at Grignan. I see with affliction the bustle of taking leave; I see, on your quitting your retirement, which appeared to you so short, a journey to Arles; another fatigue; and I see your journey to Grignan, where you may possibly be saluted on your arrival by a north-east wind; ah! I cannot behold all these things for a person so delicate as you are, and not tremble.

You have sent me an account of Anfossi, infinitely preferable to all mine. I do not wonder you cannot

* Of steward of the household.

think of parting with an estate, where there are so many diverting gypsies. There could not be a more agreeable or novel reception: you are indeed so much a Stoic, and so full of reflections, that I should fear joining mine to yours, lest I should double the sorrow; but I think it would be prudent and reasonable, and worthy of M. de Grignan's affection, to use his utmost endeavours to be here about the beginning of October. There is no other place where you can think of passing the winter. But I will say no more at present; things urged prematurely lose all their force, and often create disgust.

There are no more long journeys talked of here; the only one spoken of is that to Fontainebleau. You will most assuredly have M. de Vendôme with you this year. For my part, I am preparing to set out for Brittany with inexpressible regret; but I must go in order to be there, stay a little while, and return. After the loss of health, which I always, with reason, place first, nothing gives me so much vexation as the disorder of my private affairs; it is to this cruel reason I sacrifice my ease and gratification; for I leave you to judge what a situation I am likely to be in, with so much time and solitude on my hands, to add new force to my anxiety at being separated from you. This cup, however, I must swallow, bitter as it is, in hopes of seeing you at my return; for all my movements tend to that point; and however superior I may be to other things, that is always superior to me: it is my fate; and the sufferings which attend my affection for you, being offered to God, are a penance due for a love which I ought to bear for him alone.

My son is just arrived from Douay, where he commanded the gendarmerie during March. M. de Pomponne has spent the day here; he loves, honours, and

esteems you perfectly. My being resident for you with madame de Vins, occasions my being often with her; and indeed I could not wish to be better any where. Poor madame de la Fayette is now wholly at a loss how to dispose of herself; the loss of M. de la Rochefoucault has made so terrible a void in her life, as to render her a better judge of the value of so precious a friendship. Every one else will be comforted in time; but she, alas! has nothing to occupy her mind; whereas the rest will return to their several avocations.

Mademoiselle de Scuderi is greatly afflicted with the death of M. Fouquet; that life is at length terminated, which so many pains have been taken to preserve: his illness was convulsions, and a constant retching without being able to vomit. I depend on the chevalier for news, especially what relates to the dauphiness, whose court is composed exactly as you guessed; your notions are very just; the king is often there, which keeps the crowd somewhat at a distance. Adieu, my dear, affectionate child: I love you a thousand times more than I can express.

LETTER DCXV.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Friday, April 5, 1680.

You have written me a very long letter with your own hand; so that you set out by giving me great pain in thinking of the injury you do yourself by this conduct: you made me so many promises to take care of yourself, that I began to place some confidence in you. I cannot, however, help persuading myself that you will keep your word with me better in coming to see me next winter; so that I will indulge myself in the hope

that half the time of our separation is already passed. I cannot help wondering how quickly it has passed, notwithstanding so much discomfort and uneasiness; but, as you say, I believe it is better to let it pass than to stop it, if we could. I, who throw it away, or push it along till you come again, am a true niggard of it when you are here, and the end of every day drives me almost to despair.

I am going to swallow the Britany dose, but with the pleasure of looking to hereafter, when we shall each set out to meet together here. I desire you will keep all this in your mind, for that may lead more quickly to the execution.

At last you mention the death of M. de la Rochefoucault; it is indeed sensibly felt in this part of the world. M. de Marsillac is not yet come to himself. Never did any one better support the character of a good son, of a son who has lost his best friend in losing his father. I have made your compliments to madame de la Fayette, who is no longer the same person. I do not think she will ever get the better of this loss. I have felt it both for her and myself, and from the hope I had entertained that this acquaintance might have been the means of enabling me to serve you. Pray remark the number of persons of rank who have died within these twelve months. Had M. Fouquet's family consulted me, I should not have agreed that his poor lifeless corpse should travel in the way I understand they intend it shall; he should be buried on the spot, at Pignerol; and I would not release him from a nineteen years' confinement, in this manner. I am persuaded you think as I do.

The chevalier is gone to attend his duty; he went away in great concern about your health. I am of opi-

nion, that M. d'Evreux * will go to Arles to be consecrated, and return with you. It is a delightful establishment! This is a country-house Providence has designed for you. The coadjutor has had a very civil answer to the request he made of succeeding to the bishop of Marseilles's place †. The minister expressed himself in such terms as to make it almost certain that the king would approve it.

I fancy you will soon see madame de Venée; she set out this morning, very dull at leaving Paris: madame de Conlanges is at St. Germain. We are informed by the foreign merchants that she does wonders in that country; that she is with her three friends ‡ at particular hours. Her wit and good sense supply her want of titles at that court; were real merit, which is still superior to wit, to hold its just rank, you might then, without flattery, expect to appear there in a manner worthy of yourself. The life they lead is rather solitary; in the evening they hold a kind of circle for a moment, just as you did at Aix, to say, Here I am; at all other times they are retired from the crowd. But I wrong the chevalier in acquainting you with such things. Adieu, my beloved child; I am wholly yours: there is always some uneasiness more or less inseparable from this truth; it is a pain attached to the love I bear you, as the care of your health ought to be attached to that you have for me.

M. de Conlanges thinks you do not set a sufficient value on the stanzas he sent you on your two brothers-in-law, and their eldest brother; he excels in songs, and

* The abbé de Grignan.

† That of president of the assembly of the states of Provence.

‡ Mesdames de Richelieu, de Rochefort, and de Maintenon.

ought never to write in any other style. My son enters into the idea of making a virtue of necessity, and will wait with seeming patience till some ambitious youth appear to knock off his fetters, which does not seem very likely to happen.

Two prelates of the Grignan family are come to eat some Britany butter with me; I think myself happy in their company, till one I love still better arrives.

LETTER DCXVI.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Saturday night, April 6, 1680.

I AM going to acquaint you with a piece of news which is no longer a secret; but you will have the pleasure of knowing it as early as any one. Madame de Fontanges* is a duchess, with a pension of 20,000 crowns. She received the compliments of her friends on the occasion yesterday in bed. The king had made her a visit publicly; to-morrow she takes her seat, and then goes to spend her Easter at an abbey†, which the king has given to one of her sisters. This is a parting that will do honour to the severity of the confessor. Some people will have it, that this advancement has the air of a dismissal; for my part, I believe nothing of the matter, but time will discover all. For the present, however, I can tell you that madame de Montespan is in a great rage; she wept immoderately yesterday. You will judge what a blow this is to her pride, which is rendered still more severe by the high favour ma-

* Marie-Angelique d'Escorailles.

† The abbey of Chelles, or rather of Maubuisson, as appears by the letter of the first of May.

dame de Maintenon enjoys ; his majesty frequently spends two hours at a time, in an afternoon, in the apartment of the latter, in so friendly and unceremonious a manner, as makes it the most desirable spot in the world. Madame de Richelieu begins to feel the effects of the life of bustle she has engaged in ; the springs of her machine are visibly weakened by it. She presents every body, without making the proper distinctions ; the little business of a lady of honour, of which she acquitted herself so well, is now quite disconcerted. She presented La Trousse and my son to the dauphin, without naming them. She said of the duchess of Sully, " This is one of our dancers : " she did not name madame de Verneuil ; she was very near suffering madame de Louvois to be saluted, by mistaking her for a duchess. In short, this place is very dangerous, and shows that trivial things frequently do more harm than the study of philosophy ; and that an inquiry after truth does not distract the brain half so much as the numberless compliments and nothings with which this lady is occupied.

M. de Marsillac appeared a little sensible to the good fortune of the charming Fontanges ; this is the first sign of life he has given. Madame de Coulanges is just come from the court, and I have been to pay her a visit purposely, before I write to you. She is charmed with the dauphiness, and has great reason to be so, for that princess gave her a thousand distinguishing marks of favour. She knew her before by her letters, and the great character madame de Maintenon had given her. She took her with her into her closet, where she retires in an afternoon with her ladies, and talked in a most delightful manner. No one, it seems, has more wit and understanding than this princess ; she makes herself

adored by the whole court. This now is a person whom one might please, and with whom real merit cannot fail of producing very agreeable effects.

Madame de Coulanges is still besieged by our cousin*; she seems to have no longer any love for him, and yet they are for ever together. The marchioness de la Trousse is still as angry as ever; do you know that she has changed her mind with regard to her daughter? She could not endure her, and now she is grown fond of her; while M. de la Trousse, who was fond of her before, now dislikes her. This disagreement in opinion has determined the fate of this young woman, and a convent is her only resource. The father neither dares to show any regard for her, or his wife, because the lady treats every thing of that kind with an insulting contempt. He must suffer all the distresses of nature, *and for whom? for an ingrate*, who I am certain no longer loves him; but he is so meanly submissive, that his weakness has all the effect of a passion upon him; but never was passion accompanied with less friendship.

This, my child, is all I have to say at present; though, in a short time, I believe I shall have a large cargo. Let me know when you have received this letter, which is a little like those of Cicero.

LETTER DCXVII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Friday, April 12, 1680.

You mention the dauphiness to me; the chevalier can tell you more about her than I can: however, I think she does not seem to attach herself much to the queen;

* The marquis de la Trousse.

they have been to Versailles together, but on other days they generally make their separate parties. The king frequently visits the dauphiness in an afternoon, when he is sure not to be crowded. She holds her circle from eight in the evening till half after nine; all the rest of the day she is alone, or with her ladies in waiting: the princess of Conti almost always makes one of these private parties; for, as she is yet but very young, she stands in need of such a pattern to form her conduct by. The dauphiness is a miracle of wit, understanding, and good education. She frequently mentions her mother with great affection; and says, that she is indebted to her for all the prosperity and happiness she enjoys, by the pains she bestowed on her. She learns music, singing, and dancing; she reads, she works at her needle; in short, she is a complete being. I must own that I had a great curiosity to see her: accordingly I went with madame de Chaulnes and madame de Carman; she was at her toilet when we came in, and engaged in a conversation in Italian with the duke of Nevers. We were presented to her, and she received us very politely; it is easy to perceive that, if a moment could be found of putting in a word opportunely, it would not be difficult to engage her in conversation. She is fond of Italian, of poetry, of new publications, music, and dancing. You see, that one need not be long dumb amidst such a variety of topics for discourse; but it requires time: she was going to mass. Neither madame de Maintenon nor madame de Richelieu was in her apartment.

The court, my dear child, is by no means a place for me; I am past the time of life to wish for any settlement there. If I were young, I should take pleasure in rendering myself agreeable to this princess; but what right have I to think of returning there? You see

what my views are; as for those of my son, they seem to have become more reasonable; he will make a virtue of necessity, and keep his commission quietly: indeed it is not an object for any one to give himself much trouble to gain, though Heaven knows it has cost us trouble enough; but the truth is, that money is very scarce, and he sees plainly that he must not make a foolish bargain. So, my dear, we must even wait for what Providence shall bring forth.

Yesterday the bishop of Autun pronounced the funeral oration of madame de Longueville*, at the church of the Carmelites, with all the powers and grace that man is capable of. Here was no *Tartuffe*†, no hypocrite; but a divine of rank, preaching with dignity, and giving an account of that princess's life with all the elegance imaginable, passing lightly over the most delicate parts of it, and dwelling upon or omitting all that should or should not be said. His text was these words, "Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain; but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised." He divided

* Anne Genevieve de Bourbon, daughter of Henry Bourbon, second of the name, prince of Condé, who died the 15th of April 1679.

† It was imagined at that time, that the bishop of Autun (Gabriel de Roquette) was the person whom Moliere had in view in the character of *Tartuffe*.

We cannot forbear adding an epigram of Boileau's upon him:

On dit que l'abbé Roquette
 Prêche les sermons d'autrui;
 Moi qui sais qu'il les achète,
 Je soutiens qu'il sont à lui.

Which may be Englished by a parody on a well known epigram in our language:

The sermons that Roquette pronounces
 Are his;—who'd so have thought them?
 He swears they're his; say not he bounces,
 For I know where he bought them!

his oration into two parts, equally beautiful; he spoke of the charms of her person, and of the late wars, inimitably; and I need not tell you, that the second part, which was taken up in giving an account of her exemplary penitence for the last twenty-seven years of her life, gave him an ample field to expatiate upon the virtues of her mind, and to place her in the bosom of her God*. He took occasion very naturally to praise the

* To estimate the skilfulness of the panegyrist, it is proper to know the soil on which he laboured. The life of madame de Longueville presented the abbé Roquette with strange circuitous roads to measure, before he brought her to the way of salvation, whither he conducted her. She was one of the three ladies of whom cardinal de Mazarin said to don Louis de Haro: "We have three, among others, who create greater confusions than arose at the tower of Babel." Like madame de Chevreuse and La Palatine, the part she took in the intrigues of the minority of Louis XIV. is notorious; like them, she united the triumphs of beauty to the success of factions, and the love of business to the love of amours. Voiture represents her as already serious and political, when, at an early age, she appeared at the congress of Munster, where her husband presided over the French embassy. The Fronde began; her artifices and blandishments seduced the sage Turenne, when he came at the head of the Spaniards to give battle to the French. Beloved, not much in the style of a brother, by the prince de Conti, she made him the chief of the Frondeurs, and general of the insurgents, thus opposing him to her other brother, the great Condé, who commanded the army of the court. It was she who afterwards dragged this hero into the civil war, and joined him to the Spaniards. She long wandered as a heroine, or as cardinal de Retz said, who had himself been her lover, as a fugitive adventurer. She went alternately, commanding or intriguing, to Holland, Flanders, Dieppe, Stenay, Montrond, Bordeaux. In 1649 she reigned in the hotel-de-ville of Paris, and did what no one had ever done before, nor will perhaps do after her, she lay in there; and that at a time when this hotel served as a palace to the court, as the seat of government, and as the head-quarters of the army. Two of her lovers, the count de Coligny and the duke de Nemours, were killed in a duel. The first fought by her orders, in her quarrel, and under her inspection. The duke de la Rochefoucault, who had long loved her, was betrayed by her, both as a friend and as a lover.

king; and the prince was also compelled to digest a great many eulogiums; but as delicately prepared, though in a different manner, as those of Voiture. This hero was present, as were the duke, the princes of Conti, and all the family, besides an infinite number of other persons; though, in my opinion, too few, for I think this respect was at least due to the prince, on occasion of an event he had not yet ceased to lament. You may perhaps ask me how I came there? Madame de Guénégaud offered the other day at M. de Chaulnes', to take me with her; as it was not inconvenient to me, I was tempted to embrace the offer; and I assure you I did not at all repent, having done so. There were a great many women present, who had as little to do there as myself. Both the prince and the duke paid great attention to all who were there.

I saw madame de la Fayette as we were coming out of the church; she was bathed in tears; it seems that some of M. de la Rochefoucault's hand-writing had by

When the peace of the Pyrénées had brought back the princes to France, it was found that age prescribed repose to her, at the same time that the state of affairs obliged her to it. She endeavoured at first to escape it, by forming a party for Voiture's sonnet against Benserades. But these little contests of wit were insipid, in comparison of those she had been engaged in. Nothing remained for her but devotion: and as a character and a party were always essential to her, she became the protectress of the Jansenists at court, and, what is more, mediatrix between them and Rome. For it was madame de Longueville who in 1668, mediated the theological transaction which suspended the debates of the Formulary, and which was called *the peace of Clement IX.* Singular woman! who had the art of making herself conspicuous while working out her salvation, and of saving herself on the same plank from damnation and from ennui. It was asserted at the time, that she died for want of food, and there is no doubt she practised the most rigid austerities. "Though naturally delicate," says madame de Maintenon, "she never relaxed in the practice of self-denial." There is a life of this lady in two volumes by Villefore, which is said to be well written.

accident fallen in her way, which had awakened all her sorrows. I had just parted from the mesdemoiselles de la Rochefoucault at the Carmelites, who had been also weeping the loss of their father; the eldest, in particular, equalled M. de Marsillac in affectionate sorrow. I really do not think that madame de la Fayette will ever be comforted; for my part, I am the worst of any of her acquaintance to be with her; for we cannot help indulging ourselves in talking of that worthy man, and the conversation is death to her. She was certainly more deserving of his regard than any of those he had an affection for. She has read your little note, and thanks you warmly for the manner in which you seem to enter into her grief.

Have I told you of the reception madame de Coulanges met with at St. Germain? The dauphiness told her that she already knew her by her letters; that her ladies had also told her a great deal of her wit, and that she wished to judge of it herself. Madame de Coulanges supported her character admirably upon the occasion; her repartees were brilliant, sallies of wit flew without number; in the afternoon she was invited to be of the princess's private party, with her three friends: all the ladies of the court would have strangled her. You see, that by means of these friends she gets admittance to a private conversation; but what does all this tend to? She cannot be one of their party in public, nor at table. This spoils the whole; she is fully sensible of the humiliation; and has been these four days tasting these pleasures and dissatisfactions.

It is not without reason that you pity M. de Pomponne, when he is obliged to visit the court, as well as madame de Vins, who is no longer looked upon in the same light as formerly: she is quite the woman of business now, and is over head and ears in law-suits. She

came the other day to take a friendly dinner with me; she seemed much affected with the esteem you profess for her; you cannot prevent us from hoping and wishing to see you here, according to the warmth of our respective desires. But what am I talking of! you are at Grignan, my child, we are much too near each other; I must remove to a greater distance.

LETTER DCXVIII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Wednesday, April 17, 1680.

I must confess my weakness to you, my child; I have been these four days under an uneasiness infinitely greater than I discovered; for my fears were laughed at, and they endeavoured to convince me, that being one post-day without a letter was not a sufficient reason for me to make myself unhappy, since a thousand trifling accidents might have occasioned the delay. I allowed the justice of their arguments, and suffered them to laugh at me as much as they pleased; but in my heart I was sadly grieved, and there were some hours in which my fear and alarm got the better of my reason. You must know, that my imagination had left you on the banks of the Durance, just about to cross it; I have a mortal antipathy to that river, and it seems to have the same to me. The last time I saw it, it had overflowed its banks, and was like a fire raging uncontrolled; this came into my mind: I confess there are very few instances of lives being lost on it; but I confess my folly; I felt an uneasiness, that you are heartily welcome to call ridiculous, or what you please, so you give me credit for the unspeakable joy I felt on receiving your two packets together.

You are now then arrived at Grignan with all your family; I am heartily glad you are safe at home. I hope the air will do you no injury, and that you will reap all possible advantage from your wise and prudent conduct: but indeed, my dear child, you write too much; let me entreat you to make use of the idle hands you have with you at present. You know that it grieves me to the heart to see long letters from you; pray, then, spare me, by sparing yourself.

I have always told the truth in saying that my health is good; I intend to take medicine before I set out upon my journey. I did indeed purpose to pack up a bleeding in my portmanteau, but Du Chêne and madame de la Troche advised me against it. Be not uneasy respecting me, my dear child; I am merely going that I may come back again, and that I may have been.

Are you not delighted with having the coadjutor at the head of your assembly? He has managed this affair with great wit and good sense. I am just going to finish my letter: here are Corbinelli, M. de la Garde, and La Troche, who show me no sort of respect; because I have received a letter from you, and they think I dare not be angry. Well, they are in the right; let them do as they please, they cannot put me in a passion to-day. They tell me, that madame de la Feron has been tried, and that she is only banished out of the liberties of Paris. Madame de Dreux, they say, will not be worse treated, nor our poor brother at the Bastile*. What an outcry and scandal has there been for nothing! I leave you to make your reflections.

I generally take other times for writing, but every thing has been turned topsy-turvy, on account of having

* M. de Luxembourg, who was rather inclined to the party of the Jansenists.

been a week without letters from you. Adieu, my lovely child ! let me see your apartment begin to be fitted up, and approve what we do.

LETTER DCXIX.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Good Friday, April 19, 1680.

I WROTE to you last Wednesday very confusedly, having several persons round me who deafened me with their clamour. I most inhumanly forgot, contrary to the usual custom of grandmothers, to ask after my little one at Aix ; I am still as much my daughter's as ever, for maternal love is not yet swallowed up in grandmotherly affection ; but still I am uneasy about that poor child ; you will much oblige me in letting me know how she is : I think you say that you are very well yourself, I sincerely wish it may be true ; but I would not have you think this an excellent invention to deceive me, by always saying that you are well ; I must know the truth, or I shall not be contented. I can guess at it, though at such a distance ; therefore, if you attempt to put me off, by constantly telling me wonders of your health, you will rob me of all my comfort. Such is my disposition, my dearest child ; and I therefore trust to Montgobert's sincerity.

With respect to my health, I have told you the real truth, in assuring you, that I have not the least remains of my nephritic disorder, and that I think I am free from it for ever, which makes me greatly honour what are called nostrums. The attorney-general persuaded me to try the linseed-tea : his father died of the gravel, and he has always had such apprehensions of that disorder, that he makes this his common beverage ; he

takes it at all times, and thinks it an infallible preventive. As my father did not die of this complaint, I content myself with drinking it in the morning only: but let us talk of other matters.

I spent the whole of yesterday with the nuns of St. James; you know how they live on these days; I remember how we passed our time there last year: I cannot but admire how swiftly time flies, notwithstanding all the troubles, apprehensions, and evils, of life. It is now eight months since you left me; God grant we may soon meet again! it shall be no fault in your apartment that prevents it, for I assure you that it shall be made very handsome and convenient. We are so fully convinced you will approve our design, that the hammer is uplifted, ready to give the first stroke, the instant we get into the coach to drive off for Britany. Madame de la Fayette is enlarging her apartment still more; she is carrying it into the garden; it will surprise you when you see it. Poor soul! she is so dejected with her grief for M. de la Rochefoucault, that you would hardly know her. M. de la Garde says, that M. de Marsillac retains his melancholy, even when following the hounds*; he is quite altered; a gloom overspreads his countenance, and he avoids company as much as possible.

I have no news; you know in what manner this holy season is passed: *He who sees nothing, can say nothing.* This is a very ready excuse for ignorance. I fancy you are not displeased with being at liberty to rest yourself at home. Good heavens! how happy should I be, if your affairs, your determinations, and your health were in unison with your wishes!

* M. de Marsillac was grand-huntsman to the king, and obliged therefore to attend his majesty to the chase.

LETTER DCXX.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Friday, April 26, 1690.

IN reading over your letter of the 12th, which I had but just looked into before I sealed up my packet, I find that it is no new reason that induces you to come to us, but one of the two which you mentioned to me, and which you have long had an eye upon. I perfectly comprehend your meaning, and would to Heaven that it might be to so good a cause that I owed the pleasure of seeing and embracing you! We must, however, leave things a little to Providence, and I cannot but think it will have pity on me.

Mademoiselle de Meri comes here this evening to sleep in your little apartment; every thing is in order, and she will find herself perfectly well accommodated. It is strange to me, not to see you there; but life is full of troubles and vexations. I hope she will find herself comfortable; my being so near a neighbour will be no great inconvenience to her, at least it will be but for a very short time. I shall order my people whom I leave behind to be at her command; and she will not be much disturbed with the noise of the little repairs we are making. Heavens! can any one be disturbed with a noise that proclaims your approaching return? I shall call upon her immediately, and bring her hither. I am going to dine at madame d'Huxelles' with *heretics*.

It was said yesterday, that madame de Montespan intended to take the prior of Cabrieres home with her to attend her children upon the spot *, for he says that

* That is, in Provence.

the warmth of that country suits best with his remedies. It would be an odd whim to quit the field in this manner; for it is ten to one but she will find the little ground she still maintains occupied in her absence. For my part, I do not believe a syllable of the matter. Be that as it may, the *medecin forcé* * is attending madame de Fontanges for an obstinate and uncivil complaint, which greatly clouds the sunshine of her days. Do you not find this another fine subject for reflection, and for recalling to mind the continual mixture of good and evil with which Providence has chequered our lives, that no mortal may have the presumption to say, "I am happy?" This disorder is alone sufficient to imbitter all her joy in the midst of wealth and dignities. Poor Lestranger † has her own luck; she is badly off both ways. The *matron* thought she had wished for the *virgin*; and, on the contrary, she gave the *virgin* such wise and prudent advice, that *Jupiter* hearing of it, was in a violent rage. What a misfortune! and at the same time, what injustice! They are all at Maubuisson still, and it is thought they will not meet together again till they get to Fontainebleau, for which place they depart on the 13th of next month.

The weather is wretched; we have waited for more than a week to set out: I will not tell you the ridiculous pangs I feel from this second parting; I keep them en-

* Madame de Sévigné used to call the prior of Cabrières by this name, because, though he had receipts for a few disorders, he knew little or nothing of physic.

† The story goes that the queen or madame de Montespan believed that mademoiselle de Lestranger favoured the king's passion for mademoiselle de Fontanges, while, on the contrary, she dissuaded her from encouraging it, by advice which incommoded a prince who was little accustomed to meet with resistance.

tirely to myself, which does not at all lessen them, I assure you.

The king is to make Brancas a present of a hundred thousand francs to portion his daughter to the duke of Brancas, his nephew; and Brancas is to add one hundred thousand crowns of his own to it. Bonneuil, master of the ceremonies to foreign ambassadors, is dead, and has left a most ridiculous little wife behind him. They say that his niece, the duchess de la Valliere*, is to marry young Molac.

Adieu, my dearest child! I embrace you most affectionately.

LETTER DCXXI.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Wednesday, May 1, 1680.

I know not what weather you may have in Provence, but we have had for these three weeks past such horrible weather here, that several journeys have been delayed by it, and mine among the rest. The good abbé had like to have perished in going and coming from La Trousse; so says M. de la Trousse; you would not have believed me. They had an architect with them, and went to give orders about some alterations, which will make this house, which we before thought so beautiful, hardly to be known again.

We have a new moon to-day, which I hope will bring fine weather with it, and let me set out; I have not yet

* Louise Gabrielle de la Baume le Blanc, who was married the 28th July 1681, to Cæsar Augustus de Choiseul, count du Plessis Praslin, and after duke de Choiseul: it was the sister of madame de Fontanges who married M. de Molac, and was after his death married a second time to the marquis of Chabanes Curton.

fixed on what day I shall go : I cannot express the concern this second parting gives me ; I must surely be out of my senses to remove so much farther from you, and to place a distance of a hundred leagues more between us than there is already. I have a mortal aversion to business ; it takes up so great a portion of our time, and makes us run hither and thither just as it pleases. I shall be so affected when I am setting out, that those who hand me into my carriage may very naturally think it is at parting with them ; I am certain I shall not be able to refrain from tears, and yet I must go, if it is only that I may come back again.

Mademoiselle de Meri is now in possession of your apartment ; the noise of that little door opening and shutting, and the circumstance of not finding you there, have affected me more than I can express. All my people do their best to serve her ; and if I were vain, I could show you a letter I received from her the other day, full of thanks for the assistance I have given her ; but as I am very modest, you know, I will content myself with placing it in my archives.

I have seen madame de Vins ; she is buried in her law-suits. However, we find time to chat together, and express our mutual wonder at the odd medley of good and evil in this world, and the impossibility of being truly happy. You know all that fortune has hitherto done for the duchess of Fontanges. What she has reserved for her is this : so violent a flux, with some degree of fever, that she is confined to her bed at Maubuisson, and her fine face already begins to swell. The prior of Cabrieres does not quit her for an instant ; if he effects a cure, he will not make his fortune badly at court. Think whether her situation does not derogate somewhat from her happiness. Here is further room for reflection : but to another subject.

Madame de Dreux was liberated from prison yesterday; she was only *reprimanded*, which is a very slight punishment, and fined five hundred livres, which are to be distributed in alms. This poor lady has been confined a whole year in a room, where the light came in only by a small hole at the top, without news, or without comfort. Her mother, who doted on her, who was herself still young and pleasing, and who was equally beloved by her daughter, died about two months ago, of grief, at her child's situation. Madame de Dreux was ignorant of this event; and yesterday, when her husband and all the family went with open arms to the place where she was confined to receive her, the first word she spoke, on seeing them enter her room, was, "Where is my mother? Why is she not here?" M. de Dreux told her she was waiting for her at home. The poor creature could not, however, enjoy the satisfaction of being at liberty; but was incessantly inquiring what ailed her mother; that she was certain she must be ill, or she would have come to embrace her after so long a separation. At length she got home. "What! my mother not here! I cannot see, I cannot hear her!" She flew up stairs. No one knew what to say to her; all were in tears; she ran into her mother's apartment, she looked about her, called, but received no answer; at length a Celestine friar, who was her confessor, appeared, and told her that she must not hope to see her mother again till they met in heaven, and that she must submit with resignation to the divine will. Upon hearing this, she fainted away, and when she recovered, burst into tears and lamentations, which pierced the hearts of all present, crying, that it was she who had killed her mother; that she had rather have died in prison, than have been set at liberty to know the loss of so excellent a parent. Coulanges, who had run to

M. de Dreux's, like many other friends, was witness to the whole of this affecting scene, which he related to us yesterday so naturally and pathetically, that madame de Coulanges's eyes looked red, and I wept heartily, being wholly unable to suppress my tears. What think you, my child, of this bitter ingredient thrown into the cup of joy and triumph, to overpower the congratulations and embraces of a whole family and their friends? The poor soul is still in tears, notwithstanding all M. de Richelieu's endeavours to dry them for her; he has indeed done wonders in this affair.

I have been insensibly led into this long detail, which you will comprehend better than any one, and which has affected every heart. It is believed, that M. de Luxembourg will be set at liberty upon as easy terms as madame de Dreux; for some of the judges would have released her without even being *reprimanded*; and upon the whole, the treatment of the accused persons has been shocking and scandalous, considering that nothing was proved against them. This, however, shows the integrity of the judges.

We all approve the discourses of your preacher: we have envied and admired him. The passion-sermon, which we heard not far from hence, was a most extraordinary one; I assure you the terms *rascal* and *scoundrel* were made use of, to express the humiliation of our blessed Saviour. Do not these terms convey noble and sublime ideas? Bourdaloue preached like an angel from heaven, both last year and this, for it is the same sermon.

What you write me about this world appearing quite another world, if we could draw aside the curtain in every family, is both well expressed and perfectly true. Good heavens! who can tell whether even the heart of the princess, whom we praise so much, is thoroughly

contented? She has appeared dull these three or four days past; who knows how things are with her? She would be with child, and she is not. Perhaps she wants to see Paris and St. Cloud, and she has not yet seen them. She is extremely affable; she studies to please; who knows but this may cost her some uneasiness? Who knows whether she is pleased alike with all the ladies who have the honour of attending upon her? and lastly, who knows but she may weary of so retired a life?

I have this very moment received your amiable melancholy letter of the 24th. Believe me, my dear child, it sensibly affects me. I am not yet set out; the bad weather has detained me, for it would have been folly to expose myself in such a season. This has unhinged every thing. I shall write to you from Paris again on Friday, and will tell you about the alterations that are going on; I gave my opinion first, and am not so silly as you think, when you are in the case. We read in history * of greater miracles; there are *affections*, which do not yield to the *other* passion: hence I am become an architect.

I admire extremely what you say respecting devotion. Good Heavens! how truly may it be said, that we are all like Tantalus, with water close to our lips, and unable to drink! Let the heart be cold, the understanding enlightened, it is just the same. I have no need of the dispute between the Jansenists and Molinists to decide this matter. What I feel myself is sufficient, and how can I doubt it, if I observe myself an instant? I could talk a long time, and with infinite pleasure, on this sub-

* Every one knows that painting and sculpture took their rise from love, and that a marshal, who fell in love with a painter's daughter, became an excellent painter, merely by endeavouring to please his mistress.

ject, if we were together; but you stop short, and I am silent. Corbinelli had his share of your letter, for I am fond of his frank truths. He has just heard a sermon of the abbé Flechier's*, at the taking the veil of a young Capuchin nun, which has charmed him. The subject was the freedom of the children of God, which he explained in a bold and masterly style: he showed "that this young person alone could be called free, because she partook of the freedom of Christ and his saints; that she was released from the slavery in which we are held by our passions; that it was she who was free, and not we; that she had but one master, whereas we had a hundred; and that instead of lamenting for her, as we did, with a worldly sorrow which was blameable, we ought to consider, respect, and even envy her, as a person chosen from all eternity to be of the number of the elect."† I have not repeated the tenth part of what he said on this subject: but it was altogether a finished piece. The funeral oration on madame de Longueville is not to be printed.

You ask me why I do not take Corbinelli with me? He is going into Languedoc, loaded with the favours and civilities of M. de Vardes, who has accompanied his pension of 120 francs with so excellent a seasoning, I mean so many kind and affectionate sentiments, that our friend's philosophy could not withstand it. Vardes is always in extremes; and as I am persuaded that he formerly hated him, because he had used him ill, he now loves him, because he uses him well; this is the Italian proverb and its reverse‡. I am going there with only the good abbé, and a few books, and your idea, which will prove the source of all my pleasure or pain. I as-

* Esprit Flechier, made bishop of Lauvar in 1685, and removed from thence to Nîmes in 1687.

† *Chi offende non perdona.* The offender never pardons.

sure you it will keep me from staying out in the evening dews: I shall recollect that it would displease you; and this will not be the only time you have prevented me from continuing my evening-walk, and made me return home. I promise to consult you, and to follow your advice at all times; do the same by me, and be under no alarms; rest assured that I will take care of myself; I wish I could put the same confidence in you; but I have many subjects of complaint against you on this score; and without going farther than Monaco, have I not the banks of the Rhone, whither you forced the stoutest hearts in your family to accompany you, in spite of themselves? I repeat it, in spite of themselves; and be pleased to remember, on the other hand, that I should die with fear even to pass les vaux d'Olioules * on foot. This confession of my cowardice is sufficient to prove my apprehensions, and ensure your confidence. Let then, my dear child, the remembrance of me govern you, in some degree, as yours always governs me.

I fancy my son will meet me at Orleans. I am aware of the attentions of M. de Grignan; he has politeness, nobleness, and even affectionate tenderness; but he has some points which are not so agreeable, and more difficult to be conceived; and as every thing is cut diamond-wise, he has many sides which are inimitable; so that we are at once tempted to love and to scold him, to esteem and to blame, to embrace and to beat him.

Adieu, my dear child; I must now leave you. Surely you mean to laugh at me, when you express your apprehensions lest I should write too much. My

* *Les vaux d'Olioules*, or, as it is called in the dialect of that country, *les baous d'Oulioules*, is a narrow pass by the side of a river, about a league in length, running between two steep hills, in Provence.

things are almost as delicate as Georget's * : excuse the comparison, it comes from hence. But for you, my child, let me conjure you not to write. Montgobert, pray do not abandon me, but step in and take the pen from her hand.

LETTER DCXXII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Friday, May 3, 1660.

I AM still at Paris, but in all the bustle of a removal ; you know what a confusion it creates. I am upon every body's hands ; I have no carriage of my own, and yet I have more carriages than I know what to do with ; every one makes a merit and an honour of carrying me about with them : *basta la metà* (the half would suffice). I feel all the sorrows of separation renewed in this increased distance. We order things in the best manner we can, and it is admirable to see how readily all fall in with what suits their taste. The bishop of Rennes sets out in four or five days, so that he will be close at my heels. Mademoiselle de Meri remains sole mistress of the hotel de Carnavalet ; and I leave du But there to forward our letters ; he is also charged with all your little commissions : I can never sufficiently pay him, and that is the reason he will accept nothing. He will do mademoiselle de Meri all the service in his power, as will likewise two of my maids, whom I leave behind for that purpose ; it will be entirely her own fault, if she is not comfortable : any other person would, I am certain, be perfectly satisfied ; but I much doubt whether she will ever be so. She told me yesterday, that

* A celebrated ladies' shoemaker at Paris.

every one wrote falsehoods of her, and that you in particular had written her word, that it was impossible to believe she would hire a house without having seen it. I made her no reply ; but I could have told her it was myself, and that her appearing to be sorry for what she had done was every way extraordinary ; for if she had not seen the house, and would not trust madame de Lassai, why did she hire it in such a hurry, and without any condition ? If she did see it, and liked it, and wanted it, why does she repent of having taken it ? I know there is so much to be said on this subject, that I hold my peace. However, we are upon very good terms ; I am only vexed to see her so dissatisfied ; but I fancy it is the effect of her disorder, and therefore pity her.

I entreat you, my dear child, to be under no sort of concern about my journey. The weather is now perfectly fine, and the roads delightful. I am vexed that I cannot have letters from you till I get to Nantes ; but I am resolved not to hazard receiving them by the way, as I must go some part of it by water, and that you know is an uncertain element ; I will therefore even wait with patience till I get to Nantes, where the receipt of them will add to the pleasure of my arrival. You may also be perfectly easy upon the subject of my health ; it is as good as I can possibly wish it at present ; I husband it carefully, and am equally attentive to that of our good abbé. I shall take some books with me.

Well, here am I, ready to set out like a Fury ; determined to be paid, and will neither hear rhyme nor reason to the contrary. It is really terrible to think how much money is owing to me ; I shall exclaim every minute, with Moliere's Miser, " My money ! my money !" Ten thousand crowns is not a sum to be trifled

with ; and so much am I entitled to, if they would pay me what is due to me from Brittany and Burgundy.

Really, my child, this is a very curious letter ; my correspondence you see is likely to become wonderfully entertaining. If I had a little news to tell you from Denmark, as was the case three or four years ago, it would be something ; but I am barren of every kind of intelligence. A propos, the princess of Tremouille * is to be married to count *d'Ochtensilbourg*, who is very rich, and a very good sort of a man. You know what kind of people those are ; his birth it seems is a little left-handed ; the Germans exclaim violently against the affront put upon the family escutcheon of the good princess de Tarente ; but his majesty spoke to her so agreeably the other day on this affair, and his nephew, the king of Denmark, and even love, plead the cause so earnestly, that at length she has consented. She called upon me the other day, and told me the whole story. This is a fine opening for you to write to her, and make amends for past neglects. Does not this news please you ? Consider it as the most entertaining you will have between this and All Saints.

I shall write to you once more from Paris, and therefore shall not take my leave of you to-day. Corbignelli thanks you for your remembrance of him, and your wish that he was to remain with me. M. de Vendôme has won the prize at the ring.

* Charlotte Emilie de la Tremouille, daughter of Charles Henry, prince de Tarente, and the princess Emilie of Hesse-Cassel, was married in Denmark to Anthony d'Altemberg, count of Oldembourg, the 29th May 1682.

LETTER DCXXIII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Monday, May 6, 1680.

You observe, with great humour, that, if the human heart is left to itself, it will always find something to comfort itself with, and that its disposition is to be happy. I hope mine will have the same disposition as others, and that time and the air will abate the uneasiness I at present endure. I think you borrowed from me what you say about the passion of separating ourselves from each other; it might be supposed that we thought ourselves too near neighbours, and that after mature deliberation it had been resolved on both sides, to make a voluntary removal of three hundred leagues farther asunder. You see I in a manner copy your own letter; the reason is, that you have given so agreeable a turn to my idea, that I take pleasure in repeating it. I hope at last, the sea will set bounds to our passion, and that after having retired, each to a certain distance, we shall return back, and advance towards each other as fast as we have receded. It is certain that for two persons who seek each other's company, and delight in being together, we have had the most singular destiny. Whoever were to seek to destroy my faith in Providence, would deprive me of my only comfort; and if I thought it was in our own power to settle or unsettle, to do or undo, to will one thing or another, I should never have a moment's peace. The Creator of the universe must be with me the director of every event that happens; and when I look to him as the cause, I blame no one, and submit with humility, though not without inexpressible grief of heart; at the

same time I put my trust in him, that he will again bring us together as he has done before.

But, to descend a little, is it not horrible to be obliged to retire for six months because we passed a winter at Aix? If this were to serve any of your family, I could bear with it; but you may rest assured, that, in this country, it will be very well if it does not injure you. The intendant talks to me of your magnificence, grandeur, and noble entertainments, in a manner that astonishes madame de Vins; and this very praise will give you reason to wish that the year had only six months in it; it is very hard to think your fleece must remain dry till the month of January.

You will not hear the expense of your little alteration spoken of; think no more of it, it is absolutely necessary; for without it, the hotel of Carnavalet would be quite uninhabitable. I shall share with Berbisi* in the satisfaction he has in being able to do you a pleasure. I am enchanted with your pretty *complet*; and say what you will about Montgobert, I am certain *you did it no harm*, as the man said; you know what I mean†. It is indeed very pretty; you thought I should have received it in my woods, but I am still at Paris; it shall not, however, make more noise upon that account: I will sing it upon the Loire, if I can clear my throat a little, which at present is in no very good condition for singing.

I assure you, my child, I am strangely in want of you all: I am quite lost to the very remembrance of music or pleasure; in vain I strike my foot upon the ground; nothing appears but the same dull uniform

* M. de Berbisi, president of the parliament of Dijon, a near relation of madame de Sévigné.

† See madame de Sévigné's letter to the count de Bussy, dated October 9, 1675.

mode of life, sometimes in the suburbs, and sometimes with our good widows. M. de Grignan would be of great service to me, for I have still a foolish corner in my heart, which is not entirely closed.

I have mentioned the princess of Tarente to you, as if I had received your letter: I have told you of her daughter's marriage*; I would have you write to her, she will be very much pleased; and besides, it is an attention you owe her; she always made a point of showing her regard and esteem for you. She is to come to Vitré; she will take me out of my plain style, and bring me over to her amplification; she has the most extraordinary way of telling a thing! The other day she amused his majesty with recounting to him what I will tell you when I am at the Rocks. This is the news you will receive from me; but at the same time you may safely boast that not a circumstance will pass either in Germany or Denmark, but you shall be made acquainted with it.

Montgobert writes me wonders about Paulina; why do you never mention her? She is the delight of your whole family. Mademoiselle du Plessis will not remind me of her; have I not told you that she is greatly afflicted at the death of her mother? But I have good books and good thoughts. Fear not my writing too much; I have already given you an idea of the delicacy of my lungs†; I recommend yours to your care; get some one to write for you, if you have any regard for my life; make the most of the opportunity you have to give yourself repose and quiet; take your pleasure, and think of nothing but the re-establishment of your health: but then you must will this; and that will of yours is a strange composition: that of your

* See the preceding letter.

† See page 328.

gentlemen musicians at mass was very good; but you decry them greatly, sometimes *musicians without music*, and at another, *music without musicians*. I cannot enough admire M. de Grignan's good-nature, in allowing you to take such liberties with them:

I have just received a visit in form from your intendant; he was very reserved; but for all that I learned enough from him to find he has a great respect for you: he passed many encomiums upon your magnificent way of living; he says you are still very handsome, but that you are out of spirits, and so dejected as to show plainly you are not happy. He is delighted with M. de Berbisi, to whom I shall make my acknowledgments, though I am certain it is entirely owing to your recommendation that he has done him any service. I doubt whether this intendant will return back to Provence: I have had so many adieus, that I am quite astonished at them; your friends, mine, old and young, have all done wonders. The abbé Arnould came here yesterday, purposely to wish me a good journey. As to madame de Coulanges, she has distinguished herself upon the occasion; she has taken me entirely under her care; she maintains me, carries me about every where, and is determined not to lose sight of me, till she has seen me *hanged*. My son accompanies me to Orleans, and I have a notion he will gladly go farther.

The dauphiness is now at Paris for the first time. There is high mass at Notre-Dame, a dinner at Val de Grace, a visit to madame de la Valliere, but not a word of *Bouloi**; I verily believe they will all go mad.

* Meaning, that the dauphiness would not go to the church of the Carmelites in the street Bouloi.

It appeared that these nuns interfered too much in the intrigues of the court. They contrived interviews between the queen and madame

Every day furnishes some new entertainments for the dauphiness. Madame de Fontanges returns here to-morrow. Admire the skill of the prior of Cabrières, who has restored this beauty to the court. Young La Fayette has got a regiment; you see that M. de Rochefoucault has not carried away the friendship of M. de Louvois; but what am I doing? it is a pretty thing indeed, when another person's carriage is waiting for me, to spend my time in gossiping! God bless you, my child, I must take my leave of you once more; it grieves me to the soul; it will be a long time before I shall have a letter from you; this is a heart-breaking circumstance: however, if I could but have the happiness of thinking you would take care of your precious health, it would be some comfort to me amidst the pangs of absence.

LETTER DCXXIV.

TO THE SAME.

Orleans, Wednesday, May 8, 1680.

WE are arrived at this place, without having met with any extraordinary adventures by the way. The weather is delightfully fine; the roads are admirable; our carriage goes extremely well; my son has lent me his horses, and has accompanied me as far as this place in person; I assure you his company has greatly enlivened a journey that would otherwise have been dreary enough. We have chatted, argued, and read; we still continue in the same errors, and that you know furnishes sufficient conversation. Our axle-tree broke yesterday, but in a very lucky place, and we were assisted on the occasion, by a man, the very image of M.

de Montespan. A word from the king destroyed all their petty importance.

de Sotenville *; a man who is fit to write *Georgics*, had not Virgil already saved him the trouble, so perfectly versed is he in country affairs; he introduced his wife to us, who is, without doubt, as great in her way, as he is in his. We were two hours in this society, without being at all tired, owing to the novelty of a conversation, and a dialect which was indeed perfectly new to us. We made several reflections on the perfectly contented state of this gentleman, of whom it may justly be said, with Racan,

Heureux qui se nourrit du lait de ses brebis,
Et qui de leur toison voit filer ses habits ! †

The days are so long, that we have not even occasion for the assistance of the most beautiful moon in the world, which will accompany us as far as the Loire, upon which we shall embark to-morrow. By the time you receive this letter, I shall be at Nantes; I found out yesterday, that I am not farther from you here, than I was at Paris: and by a line we drew upon the map, we also found, that Nantes is but a very little way farther from you than Paris; these are indeed but small consolations while I cannot hear from you.

Your letters will not come to Paris till to-day; but will put them up with those of Saturday, and I shall have both packets together at Nantes. I did not choose to hazard any uncertain conveyance by water; you will therefore judge that I am not a little impatient to be at Nantes.

Adieu, my dearest child! what can I say to you in such a place as this? You have certain residents about you, who will inform you of every thing: I am fit for nothing but to love you, without being able to turn that

* The name of a character in Moliere's *George Dandin*.

† i. e. Happy the man whose flocks afford him both food and raiment.

qualification to your advantage : that, you will say, is a melancholy circumstance for a person of my disposition. My *worthy* assures you of his best services ; I am very studious to preserve him for us all. Journeys do not agree with him so well now as formerly. I embrace you with all my heart. Your brother wants to make his speech.

FROM M. DE SÉVIGNÉ.

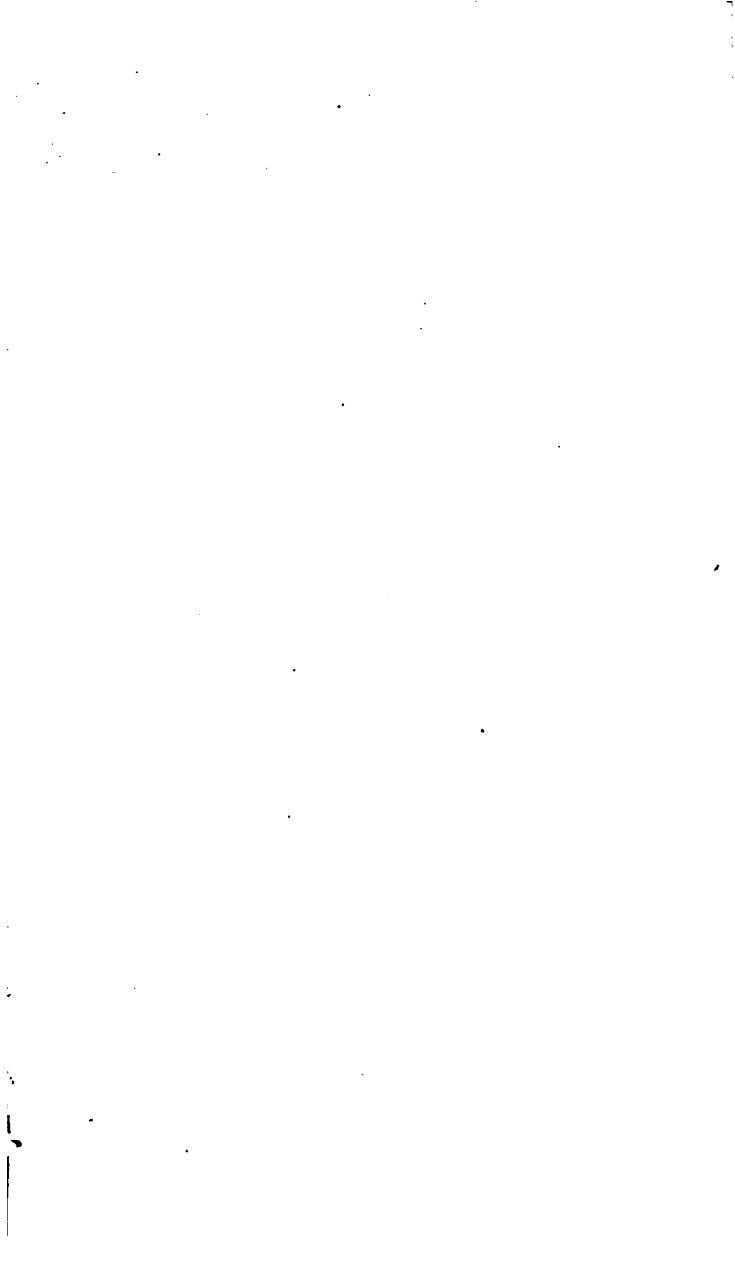
SINCE you know that I am here, my pretty sister, I have very little to say, except that, in order to make myself of consequence, I undertook to bargain for our boat ; and that I had scarcely done the business, when our uncle stepped in, and, with a single word, got it for a louis-d'or less. This will furnish my mother with fine reflections on the amendment that years make in this poor head of mine : in short, I might as well be without brains, for they are of very little use to me ; whatever I may do, think, or say, for the best, all ends in nothing, and I have most consummate skill only in trifles.

I am sadly grieved at seeing my mother set out for Britany without me ; one comfort, however, is, that you are not at Paris, and that this new separation between you, will not cost either of you the uneasiness which it would if nearer together. My mother is in perfect health, and it is to be hoped this journey will be the last she will take into a country so distant from you : I shall visit her in September, and then I hope you will pay me the compliments of congratulation ; knowing, as you do, my serious intention to pass my days in the company of Bretons, and how thoroughly I shall be in my element.

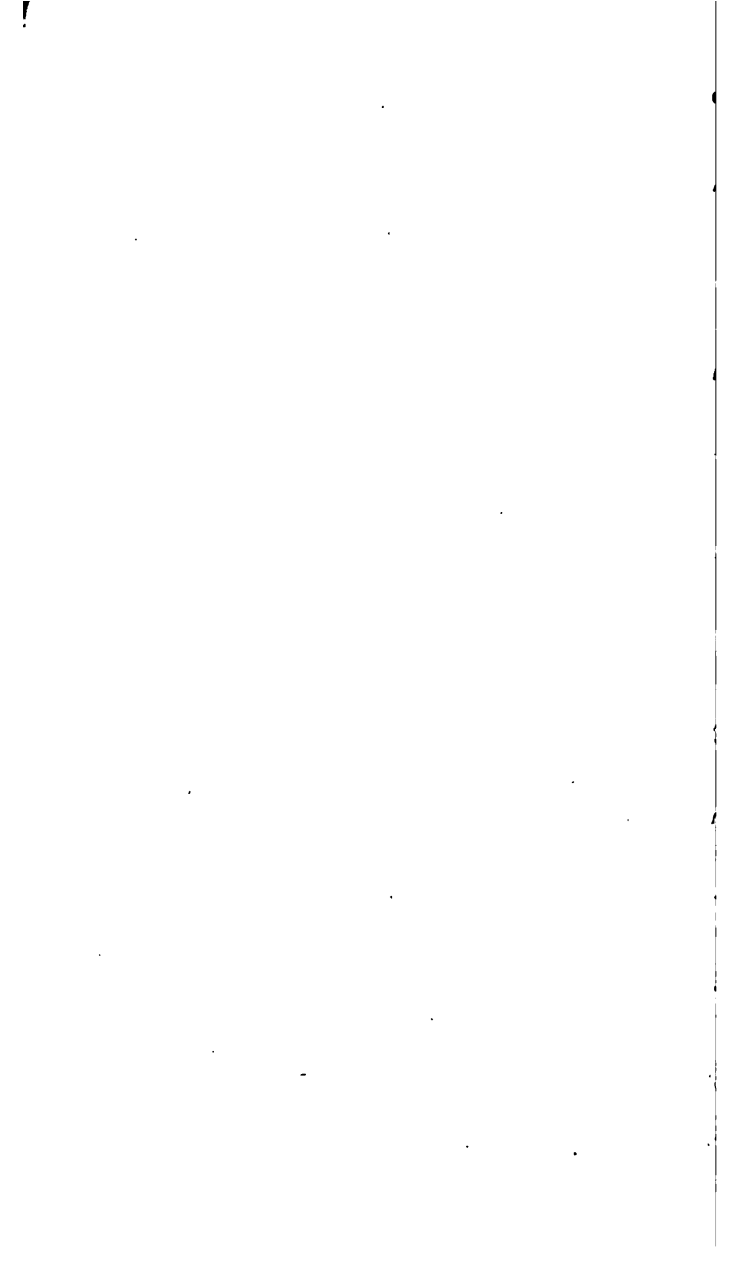
Adieu, my dear sister, adieu ! I am not yet so great a provincialist, so wedded to the country, as not to wish

most passionately for you to pass the winter in Paris; for it seems as if your coming were rather uncertain. You will have a delightful apartment, and I shall have the satisfaction of not disgracing you by my company, as I shall still be a sub-lieutenant in the dauphin's gendarmes. Let me entreat you, not to cloud your imagination in regard to me; I love you too well to give you cause of uneasiness. A day or two ago I had written a line, by way of answer, to M. de Grignan; but my mother, not without great justice, found it so very inferior to what I had received from him, that she burnt it: I hope he will be so kind as to accept the intention; for he may think himself happy in being spared the trouble of reading it.

END OF THE FIFTH VOLUME.



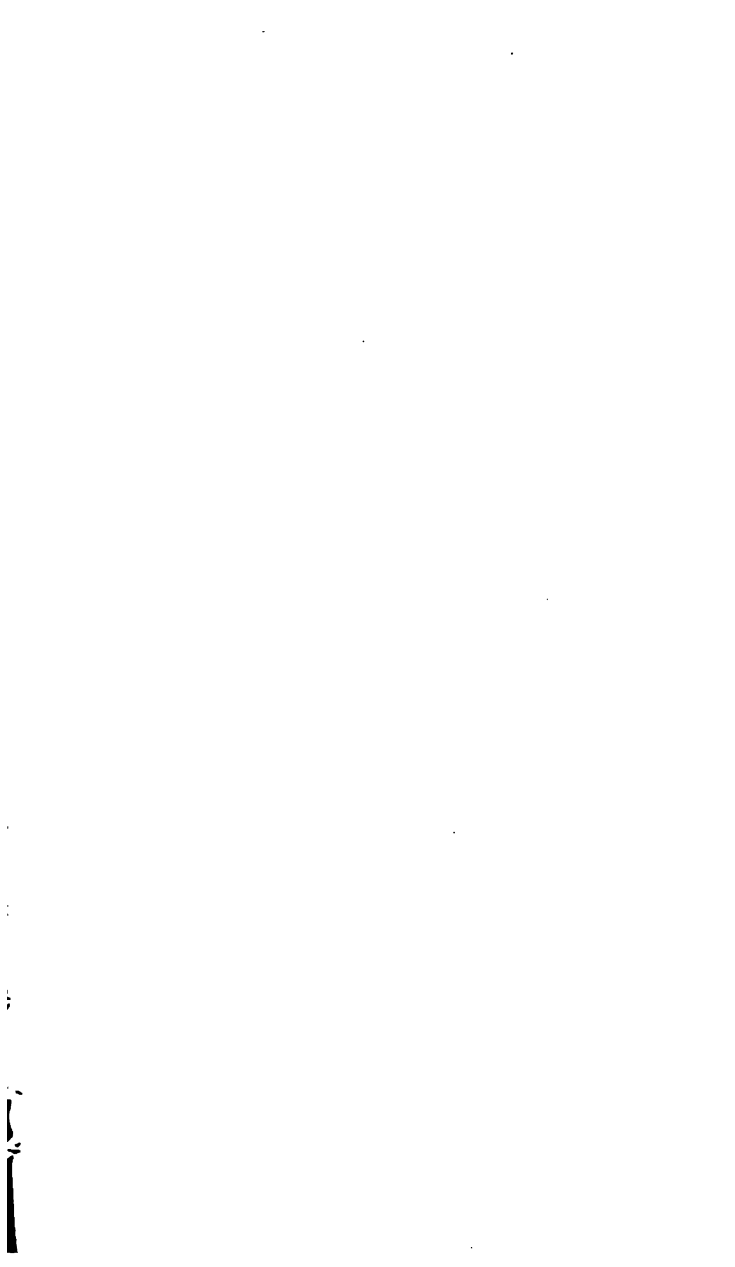
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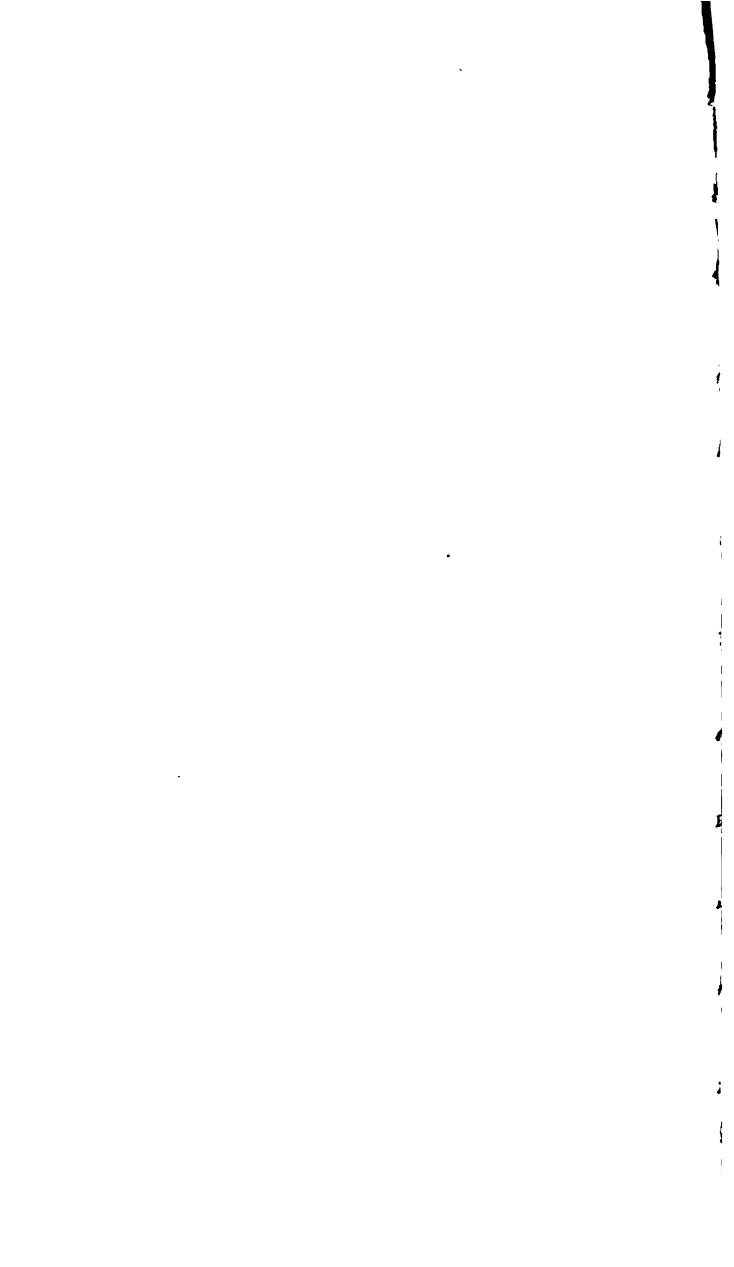


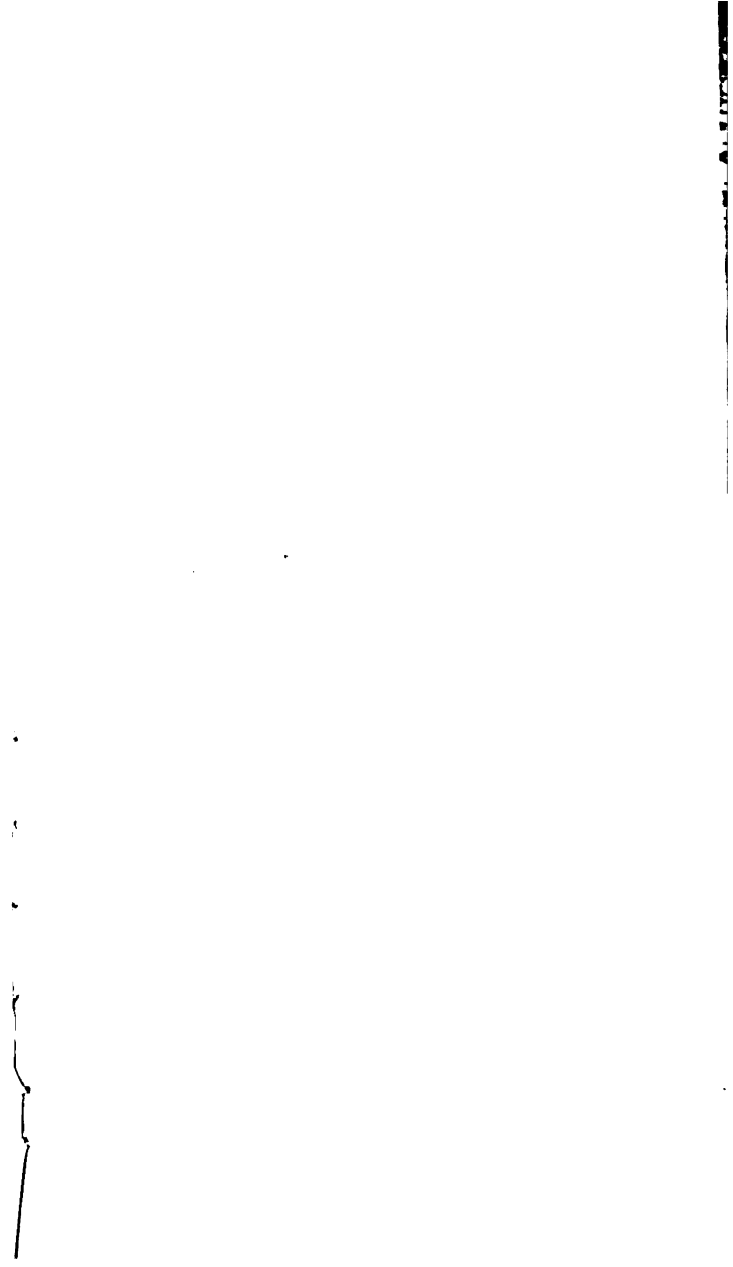
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